

TOP STORY: AFTER THE MEXICAN UPRISING  
January 24 - February 6, 1994

# IN THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

## FULL OF HOLES

Clinton's  
retreat on  
the ozone crisis

David Moberg  
page 14

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# EDITORIAL

## THE CHIAPAS UPRISING STARTS A NEW CYCLE

Since stealing the presidential election six years ago, Carlos Salinas de Gortari has undertaken a series of social and technological innovations designed to integrate Mexico into the international corporate economy. But while an inner circle of Mexican financiers has benefited handsomely from Salinas' actions, 75 percent of the Mexican people have seen their incomes continue to fall and their lives threatened with disruption.

The crowning symbol of these policies was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which went into effect on New Year's Day. One of the key prerequisites for Mexico's participation in NAFTA was Salinas' National Program for Modernizing the Countryside, the purpose of which is to impose the laws of the free market and the global economy on the country's largely subsistence-based rural population. One part of this program was abrogation of the constitutional ban on the selling of communal lands—a protection won by *campesinos* in the revolution of 1910-17. Another is that the government will continue to subsidize corporate farmers who have conquered the export market and who bring income into Mexico, and will not support those who cannot compete in the global economy.

The practical result of this is to make it almost impossible for peasants to survive on the four-hectare plots allotted to those living on communal lands. Government policy is to displace millions of these small landholders by forcing them to sell their plots to commercial enterprises, many of them foreign.

For Mexico's millions of Indian peasants, Salinas' policies are the last straw. Having faced decades of government harassment and brutality, the peasants have witnessed an increasing disparity between their way of life and that of the largely urban middle and ruling classes. "There is no work, no land, no education," one member of the Chiapas peasant army told the *New York Times*, "and no way to change that in elections." The war that boiled over New Year's Day has been simmering for decades, and "could be a war of 25 or 30 years," he said.

"What we want," one leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation says, "is socialism, to exterminate capitalism." According to their proclamation of war, that means "work, land, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace"—which is to say a government that puts human needs first, rather than making them subordinate to corporate profitability.

These goals will seem naive to some, and the uprising arcane. Reporting from Chiapas, the *Times* correspondent appeared surprised that the end of the Cold War "seemed to mean nothing to the hundreds of insurgents who stunned their countrymen [New Year's Day] by announcing themselves as the

Zapatista Army of National Liberation and declaring war on the government"—as if these people, and the many others throughout Latin America who have fought their oppressive governments, were incapable of acting on their own. And, indeed, Salinas made this point explicitly. "This is not an Indian uprising," he said, "but the deliberate work of [a] violent group that leads it."

To these simple peasants, capitalism is a system that treats them as objects to be manipulated and exploited for the benefit of property and its owners. And, apparently, socialism, for them, would be a system in which they, as subjects, would participate fully in the formation of public policy and the setting of social priorities. This does not mean that their traditional way of life would remain unchanged. It does mean that in a democracy the natives of Chiapas would be fully involved in planning the nature of the changes that progress entails.

In the wake of the uprising, the Salinas government will likely move to ameliorate the harsh conditions under which Mexico's peasants live. But just enough to pacify them. Meanwhile, if the international community looks the other way, it

will do all in its power to crush the leaders, indigenous or not, in order to prevent these people from transforming themselves into full participants in the political life of the nation. The result, in one form or another, will be an indefinite continuation of the war against the government. ◀

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 "...with liberty and justice for all"

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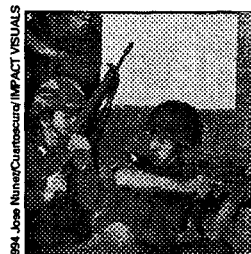
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# LETTERS

## Failure and success

It's interesting that both *In These Times* and *The Nation* recently ran editorials denouncing the failure of the war on drugs. Both cite huge increases in expenditures with no effect on drug use as proof that the policy has failed.

A very smart person once said to me that if a policy continued unchanged in spite of its apparent failure, you probably misunderstand its purpose. It's often a good idea to ask, "What is it succeeding at?" The war on drugs has succeeded in creating a politically repressive police occupation

of the nation's inner cities and a military presence in numerous Third World countries that, as *In These Times* points out, is focused mainly on counterinsurgency rather than stopping drugs. It seems to me that this is the real purpose of the war on drugs and that it's been very effective.

Rather than attacking the war on drugs as a failure, you should be pointing out that its stated purpose is a sham. This is not a minor distinction. It's the difference between seeing our political leaders as bumbling incompetents and seeing them as effectively representing the interests of the American ruling class.

This is what distinguishes liberal

from radical analysis. In the past year, you've run many articles explaining what policies the Clinton administration should adopt in order to solve one social problem or another. Too often the writers assume that Clinton shares their goals, and the articles deal only with the means for achieving these goals. What the left (and the American public in general) most needs to understand is that the goals of corporate capitalism are not our goals, and our political leaders are responsive to the class interests of those who fund their campaigns. Our leaders are not stupid and incompetent, but they are pursuing an agenda that is not ours and is not what they claim.

Tim Joseph  
Ithaca, N.Y.

## Backward?

Current law provides strict punishment and mandatory sentences for possession of drugs, while regulating, taxing and licensing guns. Wouldn't it work better the other way around?

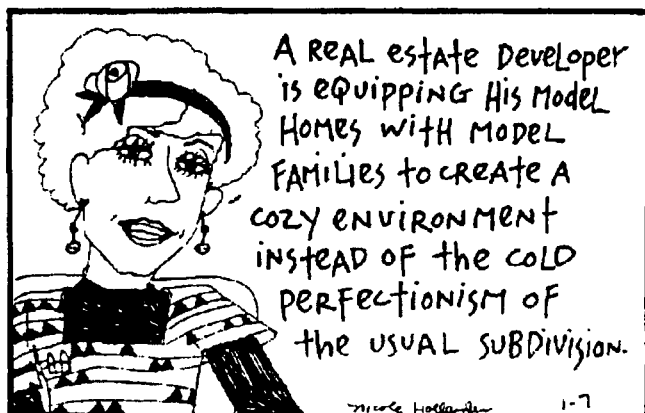
Joseph Schuman  
Chicago

## Fed to the humans

I agree: The story of Darlene Kincer deserves 9.5 on your "Appall-O-Meter" (*ITT*, Nov. 29). But so does your headline, "Women run over by wolves." How cavalierly we humans

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



perpetuate wrongful animal stereotypes! While there is not one verified incident of healthy (i.e., non-rabid) wolves attacking humans, wolves have been persecuted to near-extinction in the "Lower 48," even when the welfare of ranchers' cattle wasn't threatened. Human neurosis has to be one of history's most lethal agents. Why do you have to feed it?

Kenneth Edlund  
Delmar, N.Y.

## Rush to judgment

I have been irritated by many of Woody Igou's comments in the "Appall-O-Meter" column, mainly because they tend to put a flippant side on happenings that really don't have a lighter side. I suppose the comments that seem puerile are the result of the format, which demands something below the item even if there is nothing intelligent to add. Now the first item in the December 27 issue has crossed the line from silly to seriously offensive.

The item itself is stupid, but the comment is worse. I'm not sure why foolish bellicosity by "Lebanese officials" rates a 7.2 on the scale (one of the higher ratings given in 1993) when such behavior is pretty much standard in human history—and certainly widespread at present. I could read someone like Rush Limbaugh for allegations that the talents of Miss Israel and Miss Lebanon were rock throwing and sharp shooting. It would simply be poor taste as an abstract joke, but it becomes nasty considering that this is a gratuitous remark about specific young women. There is a glaring lack of sensitivity toward the plight of the Lebanese woman, who may be in serious danger and is probably terrified.

Barbara C. Turner  
La Honda, Calif.

## Kill the messenger

Just where did John B. Judis get figures for his statement (*ITT*, Dec. 27) that the single-payer plan (Sen. Paul Wellstone's proposal for a Canadian-

style government-administered health program) has "no chance of winning a congressional majority because of the tax increases it would entail"?

A recent report of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) says just the opposite: "The administrative savings alone are substantial, amounting to \$50 billion to \$100 billion a year. The CBO concluded that a single-payer system could operate with administrative costs of 3.5 percent, compared with current administrative costs in the private sector of 17 percent."

The majority of U.S. citizens want this plan. The main stumbling block to it is the "buy off" of so many members of the Congress by the health industry and journalists like Judis.

Polly Mann  
St. Paul, Minn.

## Redlining

I was puzzled by Gregory Squires' "Redlining, insurance style" (*ITT*, Dec. 13). The only way insurance agents make money is by selling insurance. Thus, Squires seems to be arguing: (a) for some reason, agents don't want to make money off minorities; or (b) agents mistakenly believe minorities are a bad risk at the rates they are allowed to charge; or (c) minorities are a bad risk, but insurance companies should be forced to subsidize them for reasons of social justice.

Both a and b strike me as improbable. As for c, it seems you run the risk of driving some insurers out of the cities, making insurance less available for everybody. If such a subsidy is socially desirable, it is better financed out of general revenues.

Taras Wolansky  
Jersey City, N.J.

## Straws?

With so much bad news all around, I've been struck recently by several events that suggest that the political pendulum may be about to swing—may have already begun to swing—in our direction. For example:

•Belgium had its first general strike

in half a century, forcing the government to call a temporary halt to its austerity program.

•France has just had nationwide strikes of high school and university students, there too forcing the government to change its policies. (This was not reported, as far as I know, in the U.S. press.)

•The four-day work week has become a major topic of debate in several European countries, especially France.

•The debate over NAFTA has polarized social classes and led to more class analysis in the mainstream media, albeit not always of the highest quality, than has any other political event in recent history. NAFTA got Russell Baker, the sometimes humorous columnist for the *New York Times*, for example, to lambaste capitalism in a way I've never seen him do before.

•Enrollment in business schools throughout the country is way down.

•The French philosopher Jacques Derrida shocked a huge audience of deconstructionist groupies at NYU last month, saying that the time has come to return to Marx and do a serious reading of his works, because no one else explains the present crisis in the world better.

•Socialist parties in Poland and Italy have recently won important electoral victories.

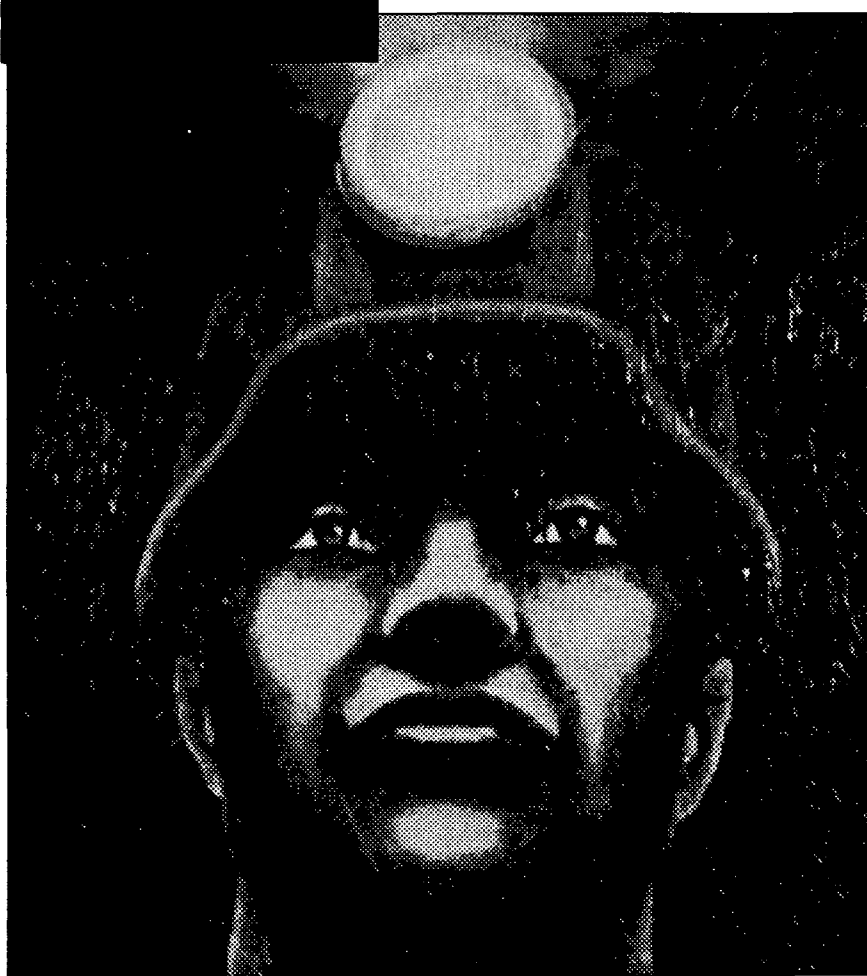
Not a bad mix of straws. I wanted to share them with *In These Times* readers, just in case you missed a couple.

Bertell Ollman  
Department of Politics  
New York University

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.



# InSHORT



PAINTING: R. ALLEN, PHOTO: DAN HUGHES

## MINERS DON'T GET SHAFTED IN NEW PACT

**U**nited Mine Workers President Richard Trumka believes the new five-year coal industry contract will mean new job security for miners and increase the number of coal jobs. He also thinks it will be a boost for union organizing and that it will "put the miner's fate somewhat in their own hands." The contract reflects not only the success of miners' solidarity, but also a potential shift in the work culture of a union and industry steeped in a combative tradition.

After 17,000 miners struck last year—some of them for seven months—Trumka reached a settlement with a fragmented coal industry in December.



By Woody Igou

### Miami madness

After a German tourist was shot in Miami, Governor Lawton Chiles went to the city to show that South Florida was a safe place to



visit. He was shown donning a bullet-proof vest before beginning his tour. "When I

saw that," a tourism official commented, "I felt like someone had dropped a Veg-A-Matic in my shorts."

*In which case you would need a Bobbitt-proof vest.*

### Location, Location, Location

A lesbian couple seeking to build an educational and cultural retreat for women in southern Mississippi have been targeted for harassment



by angry citizens, the *New York Times* reports. The couple found a dead dog

draped over their mail box and have encountered armed men on their property.

Explained one resident: "It's a sin the way they are living, and it's corrupting our community."

*Just set up a shooting range and you'll fit in fine.*

## Cases of the gods

The residents of a small town in southern Mexico, practicing



a blend of Christianity and Mayan religion, have incorporated carbonated beverages into

their worship, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* reports. The worshippers believe Pepsi has more healing power than Coca Cola because it has "more bubbles" and is therefore closer to the sun.

*Defecation, only an ad budget away.*

## Service jobs on rise!

The city of Bombay, India, recently held a major clean-up campaign,



announcing 70 job openings for the job of rat catcher.

The city

received 40,000 job applications, half of them coming from college graduates.

*Future shock for Generation X?*

## Endless war

Iraq is now a major supplier of kidneys and other organs to



the world market, Reuters reports. The increase is believed to be

the result of the 1990 U.N. sanctions, which have led to extreme reductions in the value of Iraqi currency. *Shylockian revenge, a new U.N. trend?*

## APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Vapid Cultural Zephyrs
2. E Channel Stupid
3. Unauthorized Biography Zone
4. Republican Convention Rerun
5. Bob Dole Spleenic
6. Mega-Dittos from Hell
7. NRA Heart and Brains
8. Pyongyang on my mind
9. Disavowed by Bosnian Serbs
10. Hurry, Melt the Polar Cap!

The pact guarantees union miners the right to the majority of jobs in any new mine opened by a company that signs the contract. This was the key demand, since many companies had opened mines under subsidiaries to avoid the union.

Now that "we've got our base secure," Trumka argues, the union can focus on organizing non-union mines. Last year, it won 22 out of 24 organizing attempts—including three big mines unionized during the strike.

The union also won, as a pilot project, a "labor-management positive-change program." "For too long, workers have paid the price for dumb management decisions," Trumka says. "They make bad decisions on equipment; the mine goes down; we pay the price. We have a tremendous amount of savvy and we'd like to apply it and get some job security."

At mines where local union membership decides to participate, the union "will have the ability to change working conditions, scheduling and networks on health care, and to work on individual problems, prior practices, new mining techniques, health and safety, and job security," Trumka says. "We'll have complete access to information."

Although there have been isolated cases in which workers have been given greater authority on the job, labor-management cooperation is rare in this industry, which has a tradition of authoritarian management and hardened class conflict.

The new contract is extremely fluid at the local level, and some owners may take advantage of that fact. But Trumka is gambling that local leaders will become more skilled and that miners will be the main beneficiaries of increased productivity.

The new contract permits seven-day-a-week schedules, once strongly opposed by miners. But workers who voluntarily accept the weekend shift will get super-premium pay. For their new scheduling freedom, operators must pay more, eliminate mandatory overtime and increase the number of workers at the mine. Miners won greatly expanded training and education funds for themselves and for their families, as well as pay and pension increases. But they agreed to health care restrictions and financial-incentive structures that Trumka defends as a way of guaranteeing better services for miners' money.

Before contract talks opened, Trumka called for new union strategies of worker empowerment, not passive cooperation with management. He believes that some companies will cooperate under the new contract, while others will "try to kill it," but that "there isn't any co-optation of the workers." That is likely to be true only if the Mineworkers can bring into this new endeavor the old solidarity that has been their salvation.

—David Moberg

## LIFE ON THE LINE

Since July 1983, Mumia Abu-Jamal has been an inmate of Pennsylvania's largest Death Row facility. At any minute, Gov. Robert Casey can sign Jamal's death warrant and start the final countdown to his execution. But there are growing numbers of people who think that would be an injustice. Their fight to bring attention to his cause is bearing some fruit and reacting concern about the issue of "political prisoners."

Jamal was accused of killing a Philadelphia police officer during an early-morning confrontation in 1981. He is a former member of the Black Panther Party and was a vocal supporter of MOVE, the now-infamous black-led naturalist organization. In 1981, both of those groups were on bad terms with the Philadelphia police department, a force made famous by the racist statements

of former police chief Frank Rizzo, who at the time was mayor. A police officer had been killed in a 1978 encounter with MOVE—and Jamal had played a large part in mobilizing public support for the group.

The possibility that Jamal may be facing execution because of a police vendetta is one reason for his status as a *cause célèbre*. A wide range of supporters have been attracted to his cause: Jamal has received letters of support from Amnesty International, American PEN, several members of Congress, a number of European politicians, a petition with 40,000 signatures, and a host of accomplished black and white Americans.

Jamal's writing ability has distinguished his case and has helped to pull in this diverse group of supporters. His varied dispatches from Huntingdon State Correctional Institute in south central Pennsylvania invariably are elegantly written, despite the content. And the content is often grim: Jamal doesn't shy away from issues like the death penalty and various crimes of incarceration.

In the January 1991 *Yale Law Journal*, he wrote that inmates on "the Row" often bet one another about the outcome of various Supreme Court decisions. "By viewing every decision through the prism of politics," Jamal wrote, "I never lost a bet. There is, of course, no satisfaction in such victories: every bet won has been a case lost; every case lost a step closer to death. My predictions based on political winds rather than law have earned me the enmity of those jailhouse lawyers who continue to place faith in legal precedents and principles despite their growing pile of lost wagers."

Writing as a Death Row discipline no doubt can hone one's skills, but Jamal was pretty skillful before he arrived. In the early '70s, he was known within Philadelphia's black activist community as a crusading voice who was respected as both a radio and print commentator. His star was rising until December 1981, when he was found critically injured near the body of a dead police officer.

"It seems pretty clear that the prosecutors used Jamal's political beliefs to argue for the death penalty during the penalty phase of the proceedings," says Jonathan Piper, one of Jamal's attorneys. In fact, he adds, his entire trial was shot through with errors. Nonetheless, the Jamal defense team has been unable to convince the Pennsylvania Supreme Court of the need to hear Jamal's appeal.

While Jamal's supporters continue to keep up the political pressure, his defense team, led by Leonard Weinglass, is focusing on the second track of Jamal's legal strategy, which is to investigate anew the December 1981 incident. If the current appeal effort is successful, the defense in the new trial will be much better prepared than was the inept defense in the first trial. Weinglass says there was one witness who claimed to have seen others running from the murder scene, but that Jamal's defense was never provided resources to produce those witnesses.

Although Jamal's life still hangs by a thread, he at least has attracted attention to his plight—and the broader issues surrounding it. There are some indications that progressives are beginning to bring some focus to the problems of prisons and political prisoners. In the last two years or so, several groups have initiated efforts to publicize and organize around prison issues. The Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal is one of many groups created to propagate information about political prisoners. "Jamal's case is such an obvious case of injustice, I can't imagine any justice-loving American not being moved to offer support," says Sandra Koponen, a member of the New York-based group. "So I'm doing my best to make sure that they hear about this case."

—Salim Muwakkil

## MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

### Where's the on-ramp?

On one end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Vice President Gore was making heartening noises to telephone and cable companies who want to get into each others' businesses without the bother of government regulation. On the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, legislative proposals were mounting in Congress to ease the transition toward an "information superhighway." And then the head of the largest cable company in the world brought everybody down to earth. John Malone, who is trying to sell his company, TCI, to phone company Bell Atlantic, listened patiently to ABC's Jeff Greenfield on ABC's *American Agenda*. Greenfield wrung his hands about the possibility of future information have-nots for a while. Then steely-eyed Malone said, "Nobody would invest hundreds of millions of dollars for the public interest. One would be fired if one took that stance."

The statement, a frank demonstration of the importance of regulation, also runs counter to popular Pollyannaish predictions that a hands-off policy toward corporations will bring forth the infofreeway. If we're going to get a truly open information network, and not just a supercable system, the public and its elected representatives are going to have to demand it. The same thing goes for ensuring universal service and real competition.

Meanwhile, Bell Atlantic, TCI's eager suitor, thinks it may have found a way to make money out of its investment: gambling. That interactive



option is right up there with video games, home shopping and direct-response advertising. Don't hold your breath for cable-sanctioned public forums on issues or home health care services. Bell Atlantic will need a drug-like attraction such as gambling to beat the basic problem that's driving cable companies crazy today—market saturation. People aren't watching more television just because there's more of it. In fact, new cable services appear to be stealing customers from other cable services.

### How much? How many?

TCI honcho Malone's above quote was caught in the *Tyn-dall Report* (135 Rivington St., New York, NY 10002), a savvy quarterly analysis of network TV news. The same issue offered these telling figures about network coverage of natural disasters: 93 minutes of coverage, among three networks, for fires causing celebrity property damage and three deaths in Los Angeles vs. 24 minutes for similar fires in the celebrity-free Oakland Hills, which had killed 24 people two years before, and 15 minutes for an Indian earthquake that had killed 21,000 people.

### Thank Batman

"Just because some guy wears his underwear on the outside of his pants doesn't make him a hero," one of the hottest Hollywood writers said of one of the hottest Hollywood trends: superhero films. But Chuck Pfarrer is busy writing "The Green Hornet" anyway, *Variety* notes, because the money boys like the built-in promotional and publicity value of a superhero.

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## HOLY HOMOPHOBIA, BATMAN!

A month ago, in a burst of gutsy creativity, *The New Republic* illustrated its cover story on "The Gay Awakening" with a picture of a gay Batman expressing his love to an overjoyed Robin. But the two have now been pushed back into the bat-closet. In a subsequent issue of *TNR*, the editors, obviously attempting to avoid a lawsuit, wrote a sheepish retraction, apologizing to DC Comics "for the gratuitous use of its cartoon characters, Batman and Robin, in a context that was clearly inconsistent with the way the characters are portrayed in the company's publications and merchandise."

The DC lawyers were not the only ones worried about the dynamic duo. One reader wrote to complain that Batman's profession of love could "only mean one thing ... that Bruce Wayne wishes to sodomize his ward, Dick Grayson." To the angry letter-writer, this smacked of incest. "No comic reader ever doubts that Batman loves Robin," much in the same way that "fathers ... love their sons, uncles love their nephews, teachers love their students, priests love their parishioners." By highlighting the "erotic element in all such relationships," the letter writer explained, the cover only served to undermine the "beneficial social inhibitions" that keep the forces of sexual barbarism at bay.

## THE KING AND I

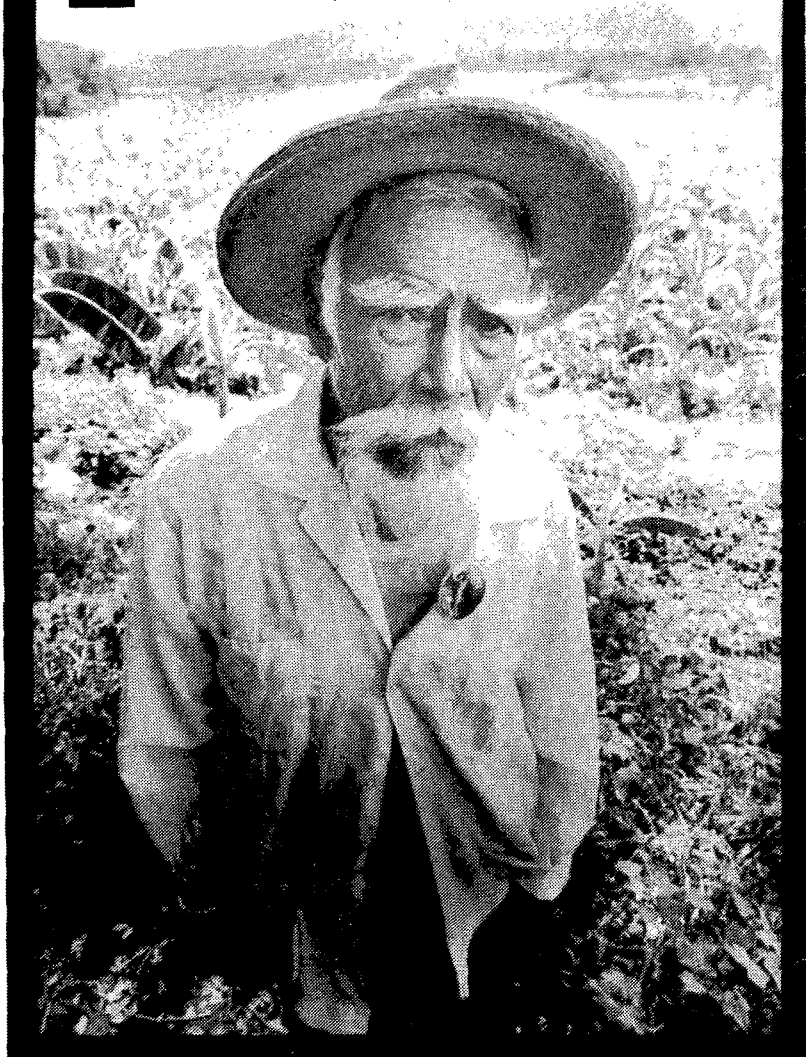
The *Wall Street Journal*, in a recent editorial, took note of the fact that posters of Elvis are now on sale in Chinese marketplaces alongside portraits of Mao. This seemingly "bizarre juxtaposition," the editors argued, "is not without some resonance. Both men had their glory days in the 1950s. Both started with great promise and ended pathetically. Both are today icons of the dispossessed. Elvis, at least, destroyed only himself."

### ROUGH CUTS

By JA Reid



## I N P E R S O N



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### THE LAST ZAPATISTA?

*Emeterio Pantaleón and the unfinished revolution*

memoration of the birthday of Emiliano Zapata, agrarian leader of the 1910-17 Mexican Revolution. Salinas spoke passionately of Zapata and land reform, linking them with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

"Land and liberty!" had been Zapata's battle cry. Now, the slogan was co-opted by Salinas who cried, "*Tierra y Libertad!*" and "*Viva Zapata!*" As a mariachi band played, Salinas waved, then exited.

A virile-looking old man on the stage, dressed in Revolution sombrero, white pants and shirt, did not clap. Looking upset, he hobbled off the stage and passed close by me. "Emeterio Pantaleón," a crowd member whispered. At 94, he is one of the last living veterans to have fought with Zapata during the Revolution. Our eyes met briefly, then Emeterio disappeared into the crowd.

Later I attended a banquet at the home of Ana Maria Zapata, Zapata's 76-year-old daughter. *Corridos* of the Revolution were sung, and many toasts of

The crowd of *campesinos* listened to the words of Mexican President Carlos Salinas, speaking from an outdoor stage in Anenecuilco, in the state of Morelos.

The occasion was the annual com-

## ETC.

By David Futrelle

### Ordinary people

The Renaissance Weekend has changed since one of its regular attendees, Bill Clinton, has moved into the Oval Office, according to Paul Richter of the *Los Angeles Times*. The event, an annual networking retreat held each winter in Hilton Head, S.C., brings together a good-sized flock of the political and cultural elite (along with more than a few journalists in search of access or celebrity status of their own) to reflect on topics ranging from foreign policy to personal growth. This year, Richter reports, Clinton was able to finagle "an exemption from the rule calling for all attendees to wear name-tags with six-inch letters displaying their first name." Clinton appeared to enjoy himself, but, Richter notes, though he "listened politely [he] offered no presidential insights during a panel discussion entitled 'Whoops! Mistakes: Their lessons and consequences.'" In the past, the event has been criticized as a self-indulgent gabfest for the rich. But organizer Linda Lader has responded forcefully to such charges. "Asked to cite any ordinary people in attendance," Richter writes, "she pointed out that singer Mary Chapin Carpenter had once dug ditches."

### To the mountaintop

When David Gergen decides to move on from his present gig at the White House, Clinton may wish to hire Walter Shapiro, *Esquire* magazine's "Man in Washington," to continue professionally the PR work for the president he is

now offering for free. Shapiro has long been a soft touch for the Clinton administration spinsters, and his column in the February *Esquire* offers an enthusiastic take on Clinton's recent rhetorical assaults on black-on-black crime. In his recent Memphis speech, Shapiro writes, "Clinton began redeeming the faith of those who voted for him because he represented the generation forged by the civil-rights movement. ... No one—save perhaps Sister Souljah—can accuse Clinton of trafficking in racial code words. ... Clinton has risen to the mountaintop with his stop-the-killing rhetoric...."

### Newt news

A profile of Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-GA) in the January issue of *Counterpunch* points out that the archconservative has spent his "entire public career ... preaching what he doesn't practice. In the early '80s, this advocate of 'family values' abandoned his wife and then attempted to dictate the terms of divorce as she lay in a hospital bed recovering from a cancer operation. His former spouse twice had to take Gingrich to court for failure to make child support payments, most recently in 1992. ... While railing against the 'imperial congress,' Gingrich in 1992 voted himself a \$35,600 pay raise, made massive use of franked postage, bounced 22 checks at the House Bank, and was chauffeured about the capital in a Lincoln Town car paid for by taxpayers." Edited by Ken Silverstein, *Counterpunch* is published semi-monthly by the Institute for Policy Studies, 1601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

tequila made in memory of "El General," Zapata.

Spry Ana Maria was full of stories. Her favorite was of Zapata's "abdication" of power when he and Pancho Villa victoriously entered Mexico City in 1914. The forces of north and south, led by Villa and Zapata, had defeated the rich hacienda owners and the landlords of vast sugar-cane plantations—and now restoration of the peasants' lands, stolen in the time of the Conquest, was within reach. But though Villa had sat for a token photograph in the presidential chair, Zapata had refused. "He wasn't a *politico*," said Ana Maria. "Besides, he was too tied to the Morelos land and people." He left Mexico City and returned to the *campos*, continuing the *campesinos'* struggle until his assassination at age 42 in 1919.

I was impressed with this family's ability to keep a legend alive. They needed something to hang on to, in the NAFTA era and with new legislation allowing communal *ejido* lands—for the first time since the Revolution—to be sold or rented. What would happen, they wondered, to the nearly 25 million Mexicans—a third of the population—who worked on or farmed small holdings? Would not these changes, they reasoned, encourage the further expansion of the already proliferating multinational corporations, a kind of "new hacienda"?

The following year, after returning to Morelos, I looked up Emeterio Pantaleón. He lived in a one-room house a block from Anenecuilco's plaza. "The Revolution is not yet finished," he immediately pronounced, pulling photographs of himself and Zapata off the wall.

"I have four hectares of land. For 65 years I have worked it." He motioned to his machete, propped in the corner. "But many *campesinos* are giving up. They are selling their lands for money. But I am not commercial. Here, look! I have money..." He scooped up some beans lying on the table. His voice softened, looking at me. "The land is *mi cariña*. Come with me. I will show you my land." I agreed, and soon we were riding Emeterio's two horses, heading over the mountain behind Anenecuilco. In a valley were Emeterio's "temporal" lands without irrigation, planted in corn bordered with *frijoles*.

We rode down-valley to Emeterio's other fields, under irrigation. He had a palm-thatched hut nearby, and Emeterio, proud of the simple, cozy space, told me how he often stayed here overnight. This, I could see, was his real "home."

I understood, in this setting, why a *campesino* loves his land. A strange peace settled upon me here in this uncomplicated hut among the green corn and high mountains. But Emeterio had his worries: "I don't know how much longer I can farm," he said. "My sons—three of them—do not want to help me. They prefer the *cantinas*. And one of them wants to go to the U.S."

"We have other problems here," he continued, looking out the hut's doorway to the verdant corn. "The river that irrigates our fields is becoming polluted. But always I will have my temporal fields, which receive the waters from heaven. I will never give up."

Emeterio leaned toward me. "Do you want to know a secret?" He whispered, "Emiliano Zapata is still alive."

My eyes widened. He nodded, deadly serious. "He's in Arabia. Someone else died in his place. He hid in Mexico for a while, then took a ship to the East."

"You're sure?" I asked.

"Si... Some even see his white stallion in our mountains here, looking for him. They say Zapata is coming back, to help us."

—Susan Lloyd



# THE FIRST STONE

## HOW NOW MAD COW?

By Joel Bleifuss

**T**he recent discovery of mad cow disease on a ranch in Alberta, Canada, has fueled concern that the disease epidemic in British cattle may have established a foothold in North America, posing a danger both to the cattle industry and, potentially, to public health. (See "The First Stone," May 31, 1993.)

Since the disease was discovered in Britain in 1986, more than 100,000 cattle in that country are known to have contracted mad cow disease, scientifically known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), a deadly nervous system disorder. It is thought that British cattle contracted the virus-like agent that causes this degenerative brain disease by eating protein feed supplements made from the rendered carcasses of sheep that were infected with scrapie, the sheep form of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. Similarly, some zoo animals and pets in Britain that have eaten food derived from BSE-infected cows have developed their own transmissible encephalopathies.

In 1989, Britain banned the sale of cow parts—brains, spinal cords, spleens, tonsils and intestines—that find their way into processed meat. And last December the German Federal Health Agency asked the government to ban all imports of meat and cattle from Britain, saying that it "had to consider the serious consequences of a possible spread of BSE to humans and the fact that there is no reliable procedure to detect the presence of BSE."

So far two British dairy farmers, whose herds were infected with BSE, have died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), a rare human transmissible encephalopathy with an incubation period of up to 30 years.

Since 1989, the number of Britons who succumb to CJD each year has increased by 100 percent. Scottish scientists have found that people who eat blood sausage are more likely than others to develop the disease. Richard Lacey, a microbiologist at Leeds University, has warned that a CJD epidemic could spread through the human population. He told Reuters news service: "The virus cannot be identified,

there is no treatment and no vaccination. So we cannot stop its spread through blood transfusions or transplants. The outlook is very, very grim in this country."

The official position of the British and U.S. governments is that BSE poses no risk to humans. As the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) "BSE Fact Sheet" puts it, "To date, no scientific evidence indicates that BSE is a human health hazard." Of course, to date, no scientific experiments have been done on humans to find out if this is so. But in the laboratory, the human, cow, sheep and mink form of the disease have been clinically transmitted to a variety of other mammals, including rodents, chimpanzees, monkeys, felines and pigs. There is no reason to believe that

humans are not similarly susceptible.

The occasional occurrence of BSE in U.S. cattle would not pose a public health risk in the United States were it not for two factors. First, almost all dead cow material that is not consumed as human food is rendered into bone and protein meal, some of which is then fed back to cattle in the form of high-protein feed supplements. In other words, the modern livestock industry has turned cows into cannibals. Second, in the late '70s the rendering industry here and in Britain began rendering animal carcasses with fewer solvents and at lower temperatures. Though more friendly to the environment, this change allows the virus-like agent that causes transmissible encephalopathies to survive intact. This is how the scrapie agent began to infect the British cattle population.

The occurrence of a case of BSE on a ranch in Alberta has now increased fears that a BSE epidemic threatens North America. The cow that contracted BSE had been imported to Canada from England in 1987. It was one of 175 cows Canada imported from England between 1982 and 1989, when both the United States and Canada banned the importation of British cattle. According to the Canadian agricultural ministry, of those 175 imported before the ban, 64 are still alive, 12 were imported into the United States and 99 have died or been slaughtered, and then rendered.

Before the ban on cow imports went into effect, the United States imported 459 cattle from Britain between 1982 and 1989. According to the USDA, as of Aug. 23, 1991, 205 of those cattle were still alive, 66 were untraceable and 188 had died or been slaughtered, and then rendered. In response to the case of BSE in Canada, the USDA is now retracing the whereabouts of the 205 cattle that were alive in 1991.

It is known that a bull imported from England to the United States was slaughtered in 1988 due to "central nervous system abnormalities." According to an internal 1991 USDA report "there is no definitive evidence that [the bull]

either had or did not have BSE." But it is a sure bet that this bull ended up in a rendering plant to be processed into bone and protein meal for other cattle.

Since BSE is known to occur in at least 1 percent of all British cows, it is likely that a half-dozen or so of the 634 cattle that were imported from Britain to the United States and Canada between 1982 and 1989 are (or were) infected with BSE. Any of these infected cattle that have died or been slaughtered have most likely ended up in a rendering plant, where they were turned into a feed additive. For even though the importation of British cattle was banned in 1989, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the federal agency that regulates animal feed, still allows cattle imported before the ban to be rendered.

Further, given that there are about 100 million head of cattle in the United States and that BSE is believed to occur naturally in cows at a rate of about one in a million, one must conclude that, due to the change in rendering technology mentioned above, the infective agent that causes BSE is already cycling through the U.S. cattle population.

In the United States, an estimated 14 percent of all rendered cow material is fed back to other cattle. According to "BSE Risk Factors in the United States," a 1991 USDA report, "the potential risk of amplification of the BSE agent" through feed concentrates "is much greater in the United States" than in Britain.

Dairy cattle are most at risk. They live longer than beef cattle, and hence have more time to develop the disease. Dairy cattle also eat a diet loaded with feed concentrates made from rendered animal protein. Once dairy cows are injected with the bovine growth hormone, recently approved by the FDA, they will need to consume even more feed concentrate. (See "The First Stone," January 10, 1993.) Though the infectious agent is not thought to be carried in milk, it may pose a risk if eaten. Of the 11.6 billion pounds of hamburger eaten in the United States each year, 2.6 billion pounds comes from "retired" dairy cows.

In an effort to prevent a BSE epidemic from developing in the United States, last March the FDA announced that it would propose regulations banning the use of rendered adult sheep protein in cattle feed.

In June, the Foundation on Economic Trends petitioned the FDA to ban the feeding of all ruminants (like sheep and cattle) to ruminants, because transmissible spongiform encephalopathies "pose a serious potential health risk to both the nation's cattle herds and meat-

eating consumers." The rendering and livestock industries strongly resist any such ban. According to *Food Chemical News*, Gary Wilson, of the National Cattleman's Association, has said the beef industry could find economically feasible alternatives to the dead ruminant protein that makes up 15 percent of all cattle feed, but that his association did not want to appear to have been influenced by "activists."

To date no FDA regulations have been proposed. They are long overdue. As far back as 1991, when only 21,000 cases of BSE had been reported in Britain, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the U.S. government agency responsible for insuring the health of the nation's livestock, reported that "most" of its staff supported federal regulations prohibiting the use of rendered sheep material in ruminant feeds, while "some" of its staff supported federal regulations that would prohibit a ban on feeding ruminants to ruminants, reasoning that a total ban "minimizes the risk of BSE."

Someone at the FDA needs to explain why, more than three years after this APHIS report, no regulations have been drawn up. Each year the cattle, feed and rendering industries, respectively, rack up sales of \$60 billion, \$20 billion and \$1.7 billion. Could it be that these industries are exerting undue pressure on the FDA, a federal agency that one year after Clinton's election is still, inexplicably, filled with the industry-friendly regulators from the Reagan-Bush era? ◀

## THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



**E N V I R O N M E N T**

# Full of holes

# W

hat ever happened to Ozone Man? Al Gore once earned that moniker from George Bush for his professed environmental passions. But during its first year in office, the Clinton administration has been moving backward on protecting the stratospheric ozone layer, which shields the earth from the sun's ultraviolet radiation. Ozone Man has been silent.

Many environmentalists feel betrayed by the administration on the ozone issue. The biggest knife in the back came in mid-December, when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) asked Du Pont to keep making chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)—the most notorious ozone-depleting chemical—until 1996. The company had originally planned to halt CFC production at the end of this year.

The EPA defends its decision as a “consumer

protection” measure that will make it easier for car owners to recharge their old air conditioners, which use CFCs as a cooling agent. But it is an environmental retreat—with harmful implications beyond the creation of another 75 tons of CFCs. It is also bad economic policy, retarding rather than encouraging emerging ozone-safe technologies that can tap vast new markets.

Bill Walsh, coordinator of Greenpeace's U.S. atmosphere and energy campaign, argues that the Clinton administration's “spineless” decision on car CFCs sets a “precedent about how they'll deal with any sensitive environmental problem.” And that's not the only precedent it will set. The move opens the gates for other industrial countries to stall on their own CFC phase-outs. And it puts the administration in a far weaker position to argue for an accelerated phase-out of CFCs (and harmful CFC substitutes) in the developing countries, where CFC production is soaring.

It's been 20 years since scientists first figured out that chlorine compounds from CFCs deplete the ozone layer in the upper reaches of the atmosphere. That discovery came nearly a half-century after a Du Pont chemist developed the first industrial CFC. Marketed as Freon, it became the leading cooling fluid for refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners. Later, CFCs were widely used as solvents (especially in electronics), as aerosol propellants and as a means of blowing bubbles into foam plastics.

The United States and a few other countries banned CFC aerosols in the late '70s, but it was not until 1987 that the Montreal Protocol was negotiated among most of the nations of the world to phase out production of CFCs. Hailed as a landmark environmental agreement, the Montreal Protocol and legislation in individual countries have cut CFC production by roughly half. Nonetheless, overall production of ozone-depleting halocarbons remains about the same as before the protocol, due to increases in the manufacture of other chemicals.

Evidence has mounted to indicate that both the destruction of the ozone layer and the resulting dangers to human health and the ecosystem are far more serious than scientists had first recognized. The ozone hole over Antarctica, whose emergence surprised atmospheric scientists, has continued to grow virtually every year since its discovery in 1985. Damage to the ozone layer over heavily populated areas of the Northern Hemisphere has also been increasing rapidly. Last year, scientists recorded all-time low levels of ozone over the United States.

Ultraviolet rays that penetrate a weakened ozone layer have been linked to increased cataracts, skin cancer, genetic damage and infectious diseases among humans—as well as reduced plant growth. New research, to be released in Feb-

*We have the technology to address the ozone crisis, but the Clinton administration is looking the other way.*

By David Moberg



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ruary, reportedly indicates that the health effects—especially suppression of the immune system—are more serious than previously believed, and that sunscreens may be ineffective protection. Ultraviolet radiation from ozone depletion, argues former United Nations Environmental Program chairman Mostafa Tolba, may turn out to be “AIDS from the sky.”

In response to the growing threat, there have been three revisions of the Protocol to speed up the phase-out of CFCs and to cover additional chemicals. Yet even if the current

phase-out proceeds according to plan—which calls for most production of CFCs in industrial countries to halt by 1996—the peak destruction of the ozone layer is expected to occur between 2000 and 2010. After that, the ozone layer is supposed to regenerate—but scientists warn that there are often surprising, non-linear changes in the atmosphere (like the Antarctic ozone hole) and that any additional chlorine in the stratosphere is a gamble.

In light of these risks, the Clinton administration's actions are especially troubling. Auto air conditioning is in

fact one of the least morally defensible uses of CFCs—especially when compared to cooling schools and hospitals in tropical countries. Furthermore, air-conditioning units in cars are extremely prone to leak CFCs. They also require big charges of CFCs to cool hot cars quickly (although that need could be drastically reduced by installing a small \$25, solar-powered fan to cool off a parked car).

The EPA's decision came in response to only the slightest of pressure from the auto companies. But

## *The Clinton administration's failures on ozone policy reflect its acquiescence to the agenda of big business.*

the administration may have also been worried about public opinion: the EPA concluded that angry motorists might face a cost of up to \$1,000 to retrofit replacements for their old CFC auto air conditioners.

But the dilemma was due in large part to the agency's own botching of its program to recapture and recycle CFCs,

according to Damian Durant, director of the Ozone Safe Cooling Association, a trade group. Durant points out that there are good, relatively untapped recycling technologies as well as a cheaper "drop-in" replacement process, both of which the EPA has failed to promote.

Clinton's policies "reward companies that drag their feet," such as the auto companies, Greenpeace's Walsh argues, and fail to encourage sound alternatives.

The main alternatives to CFCs now are hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

HFCs, which are used in new car air conditioners, do not contain chlorine and do not destroy the ozone, but they are extremely powerful global warming agents. Pound for pound, HFCs have 3,200 times the global warming effect of carbon dioxide. Within a few decades, they could account for as much as one-tenth of global warming.

HCFCs do contain chlorine and destroy the ozone—but less quickly than CFCs. Their advocates in the chemical industry messed with the numbers to greatly play down HCFCs' likely impact on the ozone. But looking at its short-term effects, which would coincide with the expected peak of ozone destruction, HCFCs appear to be about one-sixth to one-fourth as bad as CFCs.

The chemical companies continue to argue for HCFCs

as "transitional" chemicals, even though alternatives that do not destroy the ozone are available or on the brink of commercialization. In 1992, the industrialized nations agreed to slowly phase out HCFCs by 2030, which will give the chemical industries time to profit from their huge investments in HCFC facilities. (Du Pont has already invested \$500 million in HCFCs and HFCs.)

Rather than search for a similar chemical replacement for CFCs, other companies have been developing quite different solutions. The U.S. electronics industry, for example, has quickly shifted from CFCs as solvents to water-soluble pine and citrus-based solvents, or to revamped clean-production systems that require no cleaning fluids. Alternatives for aerosols range from gas propellants to mechanical spray pumps. Vacuum panels and other insulation could easily replace plastic foam. Wherever foams are needed, blowing agents such as carbon dioxide can replace CFCs and HCFCs.

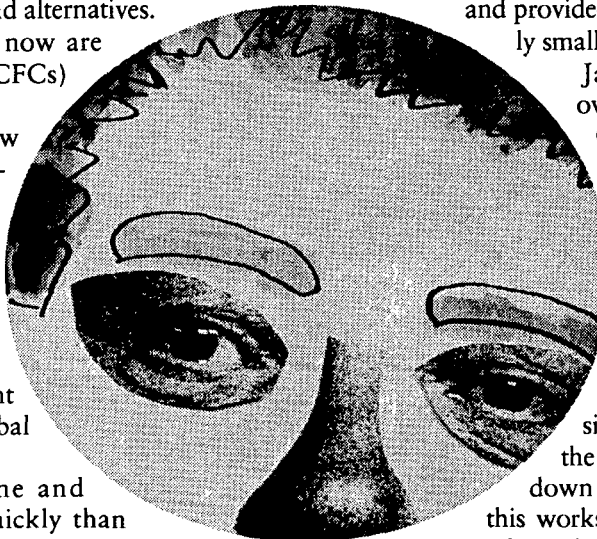
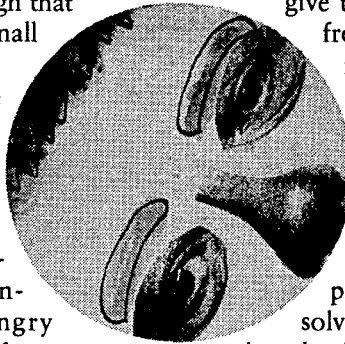
Moreover, there are dozens of alternatives, especially for cooling, that have not been developed in the United States because the chemical companies have promoted HCFCs and HFCs. The EPA has thrown its support behind these chemical industry favorites, and done virtually nothing to support better alternatives.

For example, the EPA last year co-sponsored a conference with the chemical industry and provided subsidies to big companies like Du Pont. Yet the agency refused to co-sponsor a conference of ozone-safe manufacturers—and provided virtually no funds for these mainly smaller firms.

James Mattil is the 46-year-old owner of Colorado-based Climatran Corp., which has developed a promising, environmentally sound technology for air conditioning vehicles. Despite this, Mattil has been forced to the edge of bankruptcy by federal government policies.

Climatran's system relies on a simple principle: hot air from outside the vehicle passes over water in the air-conditioning system and cools down as it evaporates water. Although this works best in dry climates, a two-stage system that relies on a preliminary device called a heat-exchanger makes this system widely applicable.

Mattil has already produced 400 of these completely ozone-safe cooling systems for city buses in Denver and Salt Lake City. The federal Department of Transportation, which provided Denver a grant to try the buses, found this system used 90 percent less energy than conventional air





conditioners, cost one-eighth as much to maintain, had a 70 percent cost advantage over its entire life cycle and cost nearly the same or slightly more up front.

So why isn't everyone buying these systems? Although the federal government supplies most of the money for city transit buses and buys many buses and similar vehicles for its own fleet, it hasn't bought a single evaporation-cooled vehicle. Worse yet, federal policies and red tape have discouraged cities from using this technology.

For example, the Department of Transportation requires bus manufacturers to undergo extremely expensive testing of vehicles employing alternative air-conditioning technology.

Although bus makers were ready to offer Climatran's systems, they couldn't afford the test costs. Mattil finally appears on the verge of being exempted from the tests—but only after two years of pleading.

Also, Mattil has been subjected to bewildering Catch-22 explanations for why the EPA will not underwrite research on heat exchangers. He's been told that the technology is too commercial to qualify for funds; he's also been told that it's not commercial enough.

The EPA was even suspiciously slow in certifying Climatran's system as environmentally acceptable. This approval, which by law must be completed within 30 days, helps companies to market their ideas, and to get funds for research and development. But when Mattil applied, the agency was busy approving HFCs. Two years later, under threat of a lawsuit, the EPA finally approved his technology last fall.

"We have felt blocked from the marketplace until after the chemical companies established themselves as viable substitutes," Mattil says. "Now we've got to dislodge them. They wanted a beachhead, and they got it."

Mattil's case is hardly unusual. Steven Garrett developed an innovative technology called thermoacoustics, which resonates sound waves through gases like helium and argon to create cooling effects. Although it has been used in the space program, Garrett can't get federal funding for commercialization, despite the fact that some Japanese firms have recently shown interest.

"This could be the next generation of cooling technology, entirely environmentally benign," Durant says. "Sound-wave cooling is akin to the first transistor or silicon chip. Yet for an administration concerned with technology, it's left lying in the backwater."

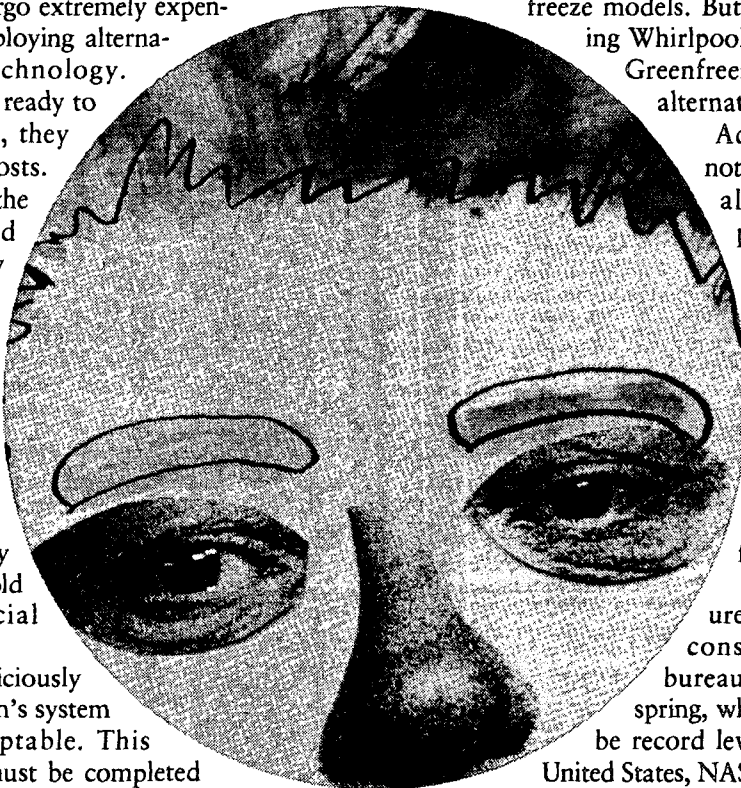
Even in cases in which alternative technologies have been developed elsewhere, U.S. companies are often slow to act. In cooperation with Greenpeace, an East German refrigerator company that had been floundering after unification began manufacturing refrigerators using pentane and butane as cooling agents. This "Greenfreeze" mixture of basic hydrocarbons doesn't deplete the ozone and has minimal effects on the climate. The consumer response to an environmentally friendly refrigerator was so great that bigger companies began producing Greenfreeze models. But no U.S. company, including Whirlpool, which makes a European Greenfreeze refrigerator, offers this alternative.

Administration policies do nothing to push manufacturers along the environmentally preferable route—which is also where the long-term market lies. This long-range market includes the rapidly growing sales of cooling and refrigeration equipment in developing countries, which will probably follow the West's technological lead, for good or for ill.

The administration's failures on ozone policy are too consistent to reflect simply bureaucratic incompetence. Last spring, when it was clear there would be record levels of ozone loss over the United States, NASA scientists urged the federal government to issue public health warnings, much as Canada has done for a couple of years. But the government gave little publicity to the findings and issued no warnings.

Later, in the mad scramble to buy votes for NAFTA, U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor promised Florida agribusiness concerns that the administration would violate the Montreal Protocol and delay the phase-out of methyl bromide, a fumigant and potent ozone depletor. Although the administration backtracked when the deal was revealed, growers are still demanding the administration's regulatory retreat.

The old ways of doing business remain at the EPA. Robert Sussman, the deputy administrator who requested that Du Pont keep manufacturing CFCs, came from a law firm that represented the Chemical Manufacturers Association. Bush's head of EPA, William Reilly, is now on the board of Du Pont. If, as the title of Al Gore's book proposes, the earth is in the balance, then the EPA is still tipping the scale to the chemical industry—despite the Ozone Man's presence in the halls of power.





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**E M P L O Y M E N T**

# Train in vain

**R**etraining for dislocated workers has become the clarion call of the Clinton administration's program on jobs and wages. It's the answer to workers who feel the White House doesn't care about runaway factories or about the growing disparity between economic classes. It's also the answer to liberal critics who charge that the administration has betrayed its promise of public investment.

*The administration's new economic panacea—worker retraining—won't get the job done.*

By John B. Judis  
WASHINGTON D.C.

As Secretary of Labor Robert Reich explained during a congressional hearing on the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): "In order that Americans embrace the challenge of change, in order that Americans reduce [their] feelings of anxiety ... it is absolutely necessary [to create] a com-

prehensive program for dealing with dislocated workers, regardless of cost."

And in fact, the Clinton administration is expected to ask for \$3.5 billion for worker retraining in the forthcoming federal budget. According to Reich, who is the administration's spokesman on these matters, retraining is designed to accomplish two important objectives. First, it is supposed to provide better, higher-wage jobs for workers who lose their jobs because of imports, NAFTA, automation, or corporate downsizing. Second, it is expected to generally reduce unemployment by allowing workers to satisfy the rising demand for highly skilled employees.

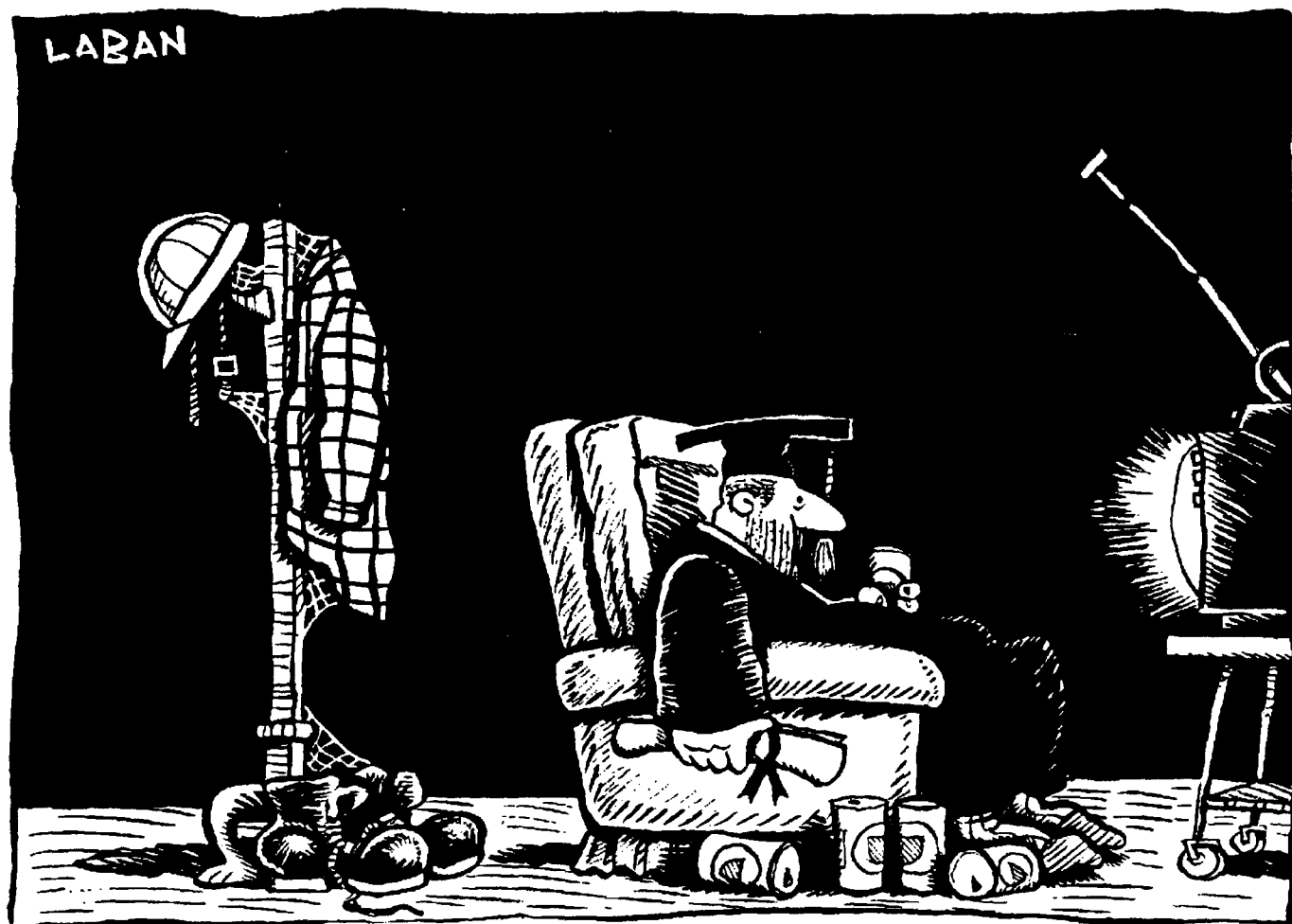
Argues Reich: "Technology is demanding and rewarding people who can solve and identify problems. Less and less are people being rewarded for their muscle or their stamina. More and more they're being rewarded for their ability to solve and identify problems."

But is Reich correct? There is no question that worker training can be useful, especially on the job. But the administration may be vastly overstating the importance of retraining—both in its ability to increase the wages of dislocated workers and to mute the threat of structural unemployment.

Reich says, "All of the studies show that if you get long-term training, a year or more, you're going to affect your future incomes by increasing that future income by an average of 5 to 6 percent." Experts I consulted disagree. Said one government official who specializes in labor demographics, "Reich wouldn't know a study if it came and bit him on the nose."

Most studies show exactly the opposite of what the labor secretary claims: they demonstrate that retraining has little effect in raising wages. The most important recent study was done for the Labor Department itself by Mathematica Policy Research Inc., a highly respected research group from Princeton. The results were submitted last April and were officially made public last fall, but when I asked the Labor Department for a copy, officials claimed that the department had only one copy in the entire building. I finally secured a copy from the research organization itself. After reading the report, I could understand why the Labor Department was not eager to hand it out.

Mathematica Policy Research studied the training program instituted under the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. In exchange for labor union support for tariff reductions, the Kennedy administration established a program of



Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). The program gave Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRAs) to workers who could demonstrate that they were laid off because of imports. Workers were encouraged to use these grants for training, but many did not. To fix this problem, the 1988 Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act required TRA recipients to participate in a retraining program unless none was available.

The research group discovered, however, that even after training, TRA recipients failed to maintain their former living standards. "More than three-quarters of the re-employed TRA recipients earned less in their new job three years after their initial unemployment insurance claim than they did in their pre-layoff job," the study found.

Moreover, the study found that manufacturing workers who received TRA training actually *fared worse* than those who merely received unemployment insurance. "Wage losses were significantly higher among TRA recipients than among unemployment insurance exhaustees," according to the study.

The study found that TRA recipients who were retrained actually "received slightly lower wages on average than those who had not participated in training." Mathematica Policy says this is because "TRA trainees were more likely

to have switched industry or occupation on their new job, and industry- and occupation-switchers suffered greater wage and benefit losses than did stayers."

The study concluded, "We did not find strong evidence that training had a substantial positive effect on employment and earnings, at least in the first three years after the initial unemployment insurance claim."

This study's conclusions directly undermine Reich's case. And retraining under TAA is the most important and relevant government training program to look at. It was designed for the same group of workers Clinton and Reich want to help with their new training efforts.

Reich and the administration's argument is also based on a broader fallacy about the relation between wages and training. Reich argues that the growing wage gap between workers with only high school educations and workers with college diplomas is caused by a mismatch of skills: too many semi-skilled workers are seeking too few jobs, while too few college-educated workers are available for positions that require advanced training. Retraining laid-off manufacturing workers will therefore lead them to get jobs at higher wages, the theory goes.

But the theory doesn't fit the reality of jobs and wages. It's a gross oversimplification to deduce that the growing



salary gap between high school- and college-educated workers means that a laid-off 45-year-old worker can substantially raise his or her salary by taking one year of intensive training. In reality, that middle-aged worker—now with the equivalent of a year in community college—will be competing in the job market against 20-year-olds who require fewer benefits, are subject to fewer illnesses and disabilities, and are likely to be capable of working longer shifts and more days.

Even on a more general level, Reich's argument doesn't fit the facts. First, there has not been—and will not be—a surplus of high-skill jobs awaiting workers who undergo training. According to Daniel Hecker of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), writing in the June 1992 *Monthly Labor Review*, one in five college graduates during the '80s ended up working at a job that *did not require a college degree*. That's compared to one in 10 during the '70s. Hecker concludes that during the '80s, "an oversupply of college graduates existed."

In the same issue, BLS researcher Kristina Shelley writes that employment projections for the 1990-2005 period indicate that "average annual openings in jobs requiring a [college] degree will be fewer than the opportunities available in the 1984-90 period." Meanwhile, the number of annual college graduates is expected to grow. This suggests that, if anything, the wages of college-educated workers can be expected to decline or remain stagnant over the next decade.

On the other side, the wages of workers with high school diplomas fell precipitously—12.7 percent from 1979 to 1989—but not because of an oversupply of blue-collar employees. As Larry Katz, the Labor Department's chief economist, has argued, the fall in working-class wages has been primarily due to the shift from higher-paying manufacturing jobs to lower-paying service jobs—and to the 15 percent decline in union membership. In the past, unionized workers have typically earned 25 percent more than their non-unionized counterparts.

Retraining is far from futile, and there are many reasons to go to college besides vocational education. But by imputing miracles to education and retraining, the administration is avoiding its responsibility to create jobs for workers and not merely to create workers for jobs. Writing in the summer 1993 *Issues in Science and Technology*, Ruy Teixeira and Larry Mishel call the administration's strategy a "field of dreams approach to the jobs issue: If we build the workers, jobs will come."

What the studies of training show is that if the administration wants to retrain workers, then it had better make sure those workers have something to do after they receive their diplomas and certificates. That takes the kind of direct investment in jobs that was cut out of the first Clinton budget and is not expected to be in the second. And if Clinton and Reich want to raise working-class wages—while strengthening the Democratic Party—they better figure out how to halt the decline of the labor movement. ◀

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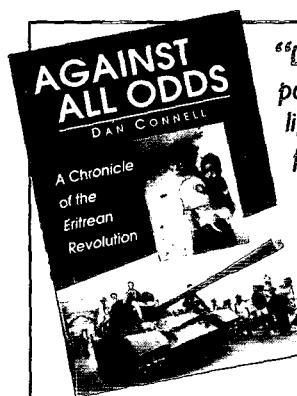
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# Jackson's back

*Thanks to his  
frank talk  
about crime,  
the two-time  
presidential  
candidate has  
returned to the  
media spotlight.*

By Salim Muwakkil

Jesse Jackson is riding the crest of a breaking wave right back into national prominence. The 52-year-old president of the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) has launched a campaign to confront fratricidal violence in the African-American community just as that issue has exploded into public consciousness. (See *In These Times*, Dec. 27, 1993.)

"Violent crime is the No. 1 civil rights issue in our community," Jackson explains, both to justify his new focus and to burnish his civil rights credentials.

Jackson's candor on crime is not without risks. Those who struggle for racial justice have historically avoided making explicit links between blacks and crime. Not only does such a discussion play into the hands of racists, they have traditionally argued, but reproaching deprived peo-

ple for depraved behavior is "blaming the victim."

But of late, such misgivings have been somewhat overshadowed in the African-American community by concern with the devastating effects of black-on-black crime. Dramatizing this new concern, Jackson recently convened a conference in Washington, D.C., on the issue of violent crime. The event attracted scores of black politicians, activists, scholars and assorted celebrities like Spike Lee and Bill Cosby.

The media tagged the conference a "violence summit," but it was officially titled the "Rainbow Search Session on Violence: Conditioning, Causes, Costs and Cures." That difference in nomenclature reflected the contrast between the media's assumptions about the conference and the intent of the participants.

The gathering had a considerable media build-up, thanks to Jackson's recent public admission that he sometimes feels relieved when he realizes that the footsteps behind him belong to a white person. This much-publicized statement has endeared him to many of his former enemies and helped rejuvenate his sagging media profile.

Reporters were anxiously anticipating that Jackson would urge African-Americans to assume more responsibility for the problem of criminal violence. But the NRC leader focused more on changing the social context than on blaming those confined by that context. Although the conferees devoted considerable attention to blacks' own responsibility for addressing fratricidal violence, the government still came in for much criticism.

"We can't dismiss the level of killing we now see and separate it from the conditions and causes and cures," Jackson said during one of the conference's many panel discussions.

In fact, aside from the inclusion of organizers involved in the street-gang truce movement, the NRC conference was a gathering of all the usual suspects, each issuing familiar complaints. Sharon Pratt Kelly, the mayor of Washington, D.C., urged the federal government to redirect resources to the problems of the inner cities, warning that otherwise their problems will "take all of America down." Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) told the conference audience that "our nation is facing an emergency of immense proportions and we have to take emergency action." In a theme echoed by many of the speakers, Rangel blamed racism and economic injustice for the crime problem.

Virtually all of the participants spoke out against the Clinton administration's crime bill, now headed for a congressional conference committee, which stresses more incar-



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**A white-collar resident, rifle and flashlight at his side, guards his home in a violence-plagued Pittsburgh neighborhood.**

altered to include more provisions for rehabilitation and fewer mandatory sentences.

In effect, the NRC conference offered participants the opportunity to underline their grievances in the glare of the national media. It was a perfect Jackson vehicle, in that it exemplified his concerns for both the enemy within and the enemy without.

The African-American empowerment movement historically has been characterized by two major strands: the separatist-nationalist strand, which stresses "self-help" strategies, and the integrationist-civil rights strand, which emphasizes legal and financial redress from the government. Although he is identified primarily as a civil rights leader, Jackson has spent most of his activist career attempting to synthesize the two tendencies.

Jackson has long maintained that self-help strategies need not be in opposition to other approaches. He has consistently chided black theorists who insist that the struggle for racial justice is an "either-or" issue—either self-help or governmental assistance—rather than a "both-and" proposition.

"The struggle for public accommodations was self-help, the fight for voting rights ... self-help, this conference itself is self-help," Jackson said, explaining that the concept of self-help is often defined by those who seek to denigrate the

ceration. Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-MD), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, vowed to vigorously oppose the bill unless it was significantly

clearly seems more troubled these days. The steadily rising tide of fratricidal violence has thrown him for a loop, and he's making fewer attempts to mask his exasperation. "We must make a victims-led rebellion," he told the conference audience. "We need a social values revolution [to] transform ourselves into our brothers' keepers rather than our brothers' killers."

He had earlier chosen the Chicago headquarters of Operation PUSH—a group he founded and once led—to admit his feelings about white people's footsteps. It was, he says, a humiliating admission. But his statement struck a responsive chord among African-Americans, many of whom are equally ill at ease about the reality of violent crime. Jackson's disclosure has inspired more candor and ventilated the discussion about fratricidal crime. Unfortunately, it has also provided Jackson's conservative critics with invaluable propaganda and provided ammunition for racists. But Jackson stands by his statement, arguing that his honesty makes him a more credible critic of governmental neglect.

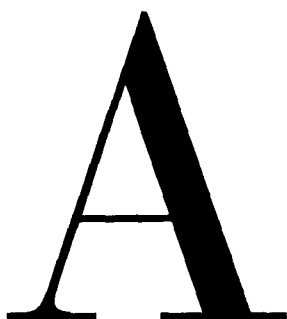
Because of Jackson's uncanny ability to materialize where the issues break and the cameras roll, it's tempting to devalue his initiatives as mere props for self-promotion. But it soon becomes clear that questioning the motives of this two-time presidential candidate is an irrelevant exercise that has little to do with the validity of his various crusades. Jackson's capacity to discern and articulate issues of particular concern to African-Americans is unparalleled, whatever his motives.

His current crusade against violent crime may have been sparked by the sound of footsteps, but it's a crusade whose time has come—just in time to refurbish his image. ◀



**L ATIN AMERICA**

# Two Mexicos



*The Chiapas uprising underscores a widening divide between the country's north and south.*

By Ilan Stavans

A handful of early conclusions can be drawn from the uprising in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. First, the struggle is likely to continue for years, resembling the "low intensity" conflicts in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The rebel military action was not a spontaneous one-time uprising, but the carefully orchestrated work of an apparently well-trained, well-armed force calling itself the Zapatista National Liberation Army. After long decades of superficial tranquility, violence may soon acquire frightening forms in other southern regions. The seed has been planted.

Second, Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) will find it more difficult to leave the underclass behind in its rush down the road to a modern, industrialized Mexican economy. The rebels timed their attack to come just as

the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—the ultimate symbol of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's modernization push—went into effect.

It's no wonder that the people of Chiapas, nearly half of whom are indigenous, feel left out of the "new Mexico." Although Chiapas' resources are central to the PRI's industrialization efforts, the state's impoverished people—hundreds of thousands of whom are landless—have been overlooked. For example, Chiapas and another southern state, Tabasco, produce 80 percent of Mexico's offshore oil, yet 60 percent of the people live below the poverty line, according to reports. Chiapas accounts for 50 percent of the country's hydroelectric power, yet half of the population has no access to drinking water or electricity. The state's dairy and beef industry make Chiapas the country's biggest provider of protein, yet residents have the largest protein deficiency. And NAFTA is only expected to make these disparities worse.

A third conclusion—the most important one—is that we are witnessing nothing less than a fracture in the nation's map. Northern Mexico, led by Monterrey, Chihuahua and Hermosillo, is an advanced region, full of polluted cities controlled by technocrats. Its economy is quickly developing, thanks in part to foreign investment. The south, on the other hand, is a largely rural zone mainly populated by illiterate Indians and naive itinerant tourists, a region of ruins and pyramids never quite in touch with the present and the government's vision of the future. It's a tale of two Mexicos, a country divided, torn between its desire to move on and its ancient Zapotec, Mayan and Aztec roots. The self-congratulatory PRI has never bothered to try to overcome this divide.

Salinas and his administration were so busy looking north, in fact, that they apparently failed to notice the dark clouds forming behind them. In truth, the Chiapas uprising should not have come as a surprise. Rumors of guerrilla training camps in Chiapas and on the Yucatan Peninsula had been circulating for years. And only six months before the actual violence began, the Mexican army made a thorough search in nearby towns, looking to confiscate weapons and to interrogate civilians.

Although local Indians have long expressed their unhappiness with the PRI's modernization push, they were repeatedly silenced by local bosses and their grievances were not addressed. Animosity soon turned into activism—and then armed revolt.

The government's immediate reaction to the uprising was absolute denial. The president did not address the Mexican people until several days after the original violence occurred, when it was obvious the crisis would not

go away. While the rebel offensive seemed to be waning in Chiapas, other uprisings emerged in nearby areas. And just as Salinas and other officials finally were beginning to pay attention, several car bombs exploded in Mexico City and other urban centers. From Ciudad Juarez to Merida, Mexicans were terrorized, and demanded accountability and action from their leader.

Ten days after the initial rebel actions, Salinas responded by sacking Interior Minister Patrocinio González. González

The rebels' ties to the church and foreign forces, nevertheless, are beside the point. What's crucial about the emergence of the Zapatista National Liberation Army is that it demonstrates how few real democratic options now exist for disenfranchised Mexicans. After the dynamic fall of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania, Mexico is now arguably the world's most sophisticated, self-contained dictatorship.

In recent decades, the PRI has consistently stolen elections from opposition factions and denied alternative parties a free democratic voice in the political debate. Salinas himself took office after a highly suspect election victory over Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, which was widely denounced as a fraud at home and abroad. Forced to acknowledge its fragile status, the PRI has offered the gubernatorial seats of several states to followers of Cárdenas and his democratic front, as well as to supporters of the center-right National Action Party.

The next presidential elections are scheduled for August, and Luis Donaldo Colosio is already campaigning as the PRI's chosen successor to the outgoing Salinas. This time around, the election promises to be different, simply because the Zapatistas are on every-

one's mind. Under increasing pressure at home and abroad, the government may finally be forced into holding fair elections. There's at least a chance that a presidential candidate of the ruling party could lose for the first time since 1929.

During the last couple of years, Salinas was so busy selling NAFTA that he obviously forgot to address urgent issues at home. In the end, he will probably go down in history as a leader of the middle class and bourgeoisie with no regard whatsoever for the underclass. I was in Mexico City the night when the American Senate finally voted in favor of a trade treaty with Mexico. A sense of renewal, of beginning a new era, could be felt throughout the nation's urban centers. In rural areas, however, the general opinion was essentially different.

The modern Zapatistas are accusing the government of selling the country's soul to the devil. While the rebels have yet to fully articulate their ideology, angry Indians in Chiapas are dreaming of socialism and hoping for a non-exclusionary tomorrow, in which the long-suppressed aboriginal population plays an active role.

Ilán Stavans, a Mexican novelist and critic, teaches at Amherst College. His book, *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity*, will be published by HarperCollins this fall.



**Mexican troops brought in to quell the Chiapas uprising.**

had been governor of Chiapas from 1988 until 1993, during which time he had been widely condemned by human rights groups for turning a blind eye to the jailing and beating of Indian peasant organizers. He was replaced by Attorney General Jorge Carpizo, and Salinas named Foreign Minister Manuel Camacho Solís to head a new Commission for Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas.

Salinas may be at least partly correct in his claim that the insurgency has been orchestrated by Central American rebels active on Mexico's borders with Guatemala and Belize. The government also put forth the theory that radical Catholic priests are aiding the rebels.

Links between the Zapatista National Liberation Army and south-of-the-border forces seem apparent—not only because of the Marxist tenor of the soldiers' proclamations, but because of the rebels' mention of light-skinned foreigners in their ranks. And ties between the church and left-wing militant groups are also nothing new. Around 1926, for example, a movement known as the Cristero Rebellion, which pitted priests against the state, flared in urban centers and the countryside.

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## E D U C A T I O N

# Redefining “best and brightest”

By Martin Haberman

I have the dubious distinction of having developed the most teacher-education programs in America. All of these efforts, whether successes or failures, have been directed at getting better teachers for children in poverty from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the course of 34 years of doing this, I have developed a job-interview system that can predict which candidates will be successful with children in urban schools.

It will come as no surprise to the readers of *In These Times* that the “best and the brightest” teachers are not 25-year-old white females from small towns or suburbs with high grade point averages who “always wanted to teach.” The profile of the “best and the brightest” for culturally diverse children in urban poverty is as follows:

- Didn’t decide to teach until after graduation from college.
- Tried (and succeeded) at several jobs or careers.
- Is between 30 and 50 years of age.
- Attended an urban high school.
- Has raised several children, is a parent, or has had close, in-depth, meaningful relations with children and youth.
- Currently lives in the city and plans to continue to do so.
- Is seeking and preparing for a teach-

ing position in only an urban school system. (Doesn’t believe “teaching is teaching” or “kids are kids.”)

- Has had personal and continuing experiences with violence and of living “normally” in a violent community and city.
- Has majored in just about anything at the university.
- May or may not have an above-average grade point average.
- Expects to visit the homes of the children he/she teaches.
- Has some awareness of or personal experience with a range of health and human services available in the urban area.
- Expects that the school bureaucracy will be irrational and intrusive.
- Is likely not to be of Euro-American background, but a person of color.
- Is likely to be sensitive to, aware of and working on his/her own racism,

*The best teachers  
for inner-city  
schools often  
have the same  
background as  
their students.*

sexism, classism or other prejudices.

These are some of the attributes that, taken together, provide a thumbnail sketch. Taken singly, each has no predictive validity. Taken together they characterize but do not explain teaching success. I cite them here merely to provide a real-world alternative to “the best and the brightest” stereotype that emanates from blue-ribbon committees, national panels, foundations and other fantasy factories that have nothing whatsoever to do with children in poverty, their schooling or the preparation of their teachers.

In my current Milwaukee program, we prepare paraprofessionals with college degrees to become teachers. These are individuals who share most if not all of the attributes cited above. They also share the experience of living in poverty themselves. Indeed, many of them are currently living in poverty and need not recollect former periods of their lives. In many ways these new teachers are “at risk” themselves because of their income level.

Since they had all been carefully selected as having a commitment to the behaviors and ideology that matched that of great urban teachers, I knew they would be successful. What I did not anticipate were the effects of their own economic levels and the stress it creates during their first year. (In our program, the first year of teaching, with coaching, is in essence the preparation program.) Every year for the past three years we have had some beginning teachers experience the following:

- Death of a child or death of the teacher.
- Critical, life-threatening injuries to a member of the teacher’s immediate family.
- Violence at home (either abuse from a spouse or child abuse).
- Bankruptcy.
- Forced moving, i.e., the need to find a new residence for the family.
- Inability to secure affordable home or



car insurance.

○Serious illnesses requiring unforeseen surgery or rehabilitation.

○Chemical or drug dependency.

○Serious and continuing transportation problems.

○Marital problems of all types and severity.

○Child custody problems.

○Lawsuits related to a variety of out-of-school issues for which the teacher could not afford counsel.

○Poor nutrition, exercise and sleep habits.

○No preventive medicine for themselves or their families.

○Mental and emotional problems, treated and untreated.

I have been impressed, "floored" would be more accurate, by the ability of our teachers to weather these storms at the same time they learned to be satisfactory, superior or star teachers in extremely demanding urban situations.

The lesson I learned is this: Carefully selected "best and brightest" *urban* teachers who are themselves in poverty, close to poverty or recently in

poverty, can empathize with their students and teach them better. They know in their bones what it means for a child to "sneak" to school early so that he/she doesn't get beaten up and why it's important to have *unlocked* school doors and to serve breakfast. They not only show great understanding for the children but for parents. Sometimes this also takes the form of tough love. Our teachers follow through and insist upon parents performing their responsibilities at the same time they exude empathy for life conditions they can appreciate and well understand.

The focus of our program is on preparing the inter-professional practitioner. Teachers cannot themselves perform the range of health and human services their children need, but they can learn to identify conditions (such as abuse) and, even more, expect and anticipate the needs of their children for services. Teachers can also be taught to help their children's families to make the connections they will need to get services they don't know they

need, don't know are available or don't know how to access.

Many in teacher education still advocate simplistic ethnic matching as a way to get diverse urban children the teachers they need. In my experience, this is only an important first step. Finding and selecting future teachers who have also experienced urban poverty—those who can connect their children's life experiences to school curricula—provides even higher potential for effective teaching. ◀

**Martin Haberman** is Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

*This article is part of a continuing series on education edited by Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The series, "Notes From the Back of the Class," covers a wide range of education-related issues. Contributions from readers are welcome. Manuscripts of no more than 1,000 words should be sent to Alex Molnar c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.*

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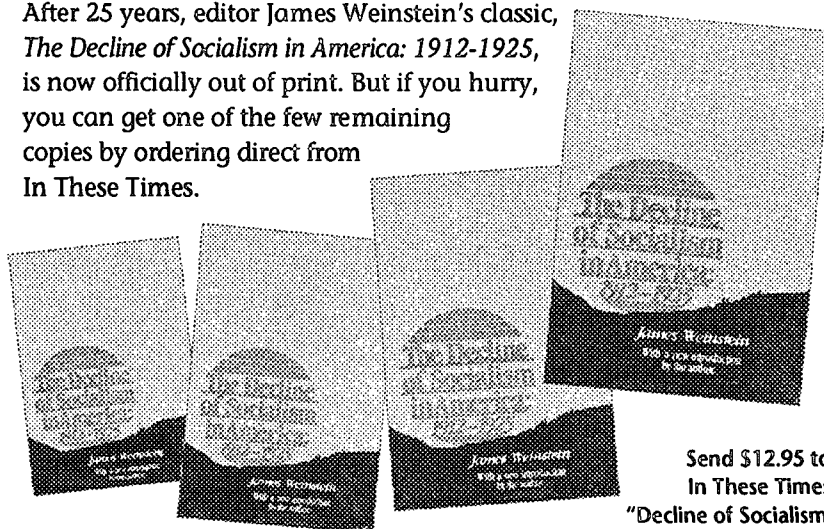
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## VIEWPOINT

# In praise of NAFTA

By Tim Wohlforth

American labor was wrong to invest so much of its political clout in attempting to defeat the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This is true not simply because labor lost the battle and thereby weakened its potential influence, but also because its position was fundamentally wrongheaded. A victory would only have propelled labor further down a dead-end road.

NAFTA was negotiated by the Bush administration in the interest of American corporations, and Clinton's side agreements did not change its essentially corporatist character. Both Mexico and the United States are governed by parties that represent the interests of capital, not labor. World trade is conducted on the basis of capitalism. Labor needs to defend its members within this framework.

The heart of the NAFTA debate was the question of free trade vs. tariffs. It is difficult to believe that those who argued "Not *this* NAFTA" would find satisfaction in any NAFTA negotiated within a capitalist framework. So the question boils down to this: Given the nature of the world economic system, are workers as a whole helped or hurt by tariff barriers? I would argue that the working-class cause is significantly set back by protectionism.

It is unfashionable on the left these

days to read Marx. This fact is regrettable, because Marx's thinking offers valuable lessons for today. Marx believed that capitalism was historically progressive because it expanded the productive forces of humankind. This process was in the interests of working people. It created the productive infrastructure needed for a more humane socialist society and at the same time created, educated and trained a working class capable of overthrowing the capitalist system. Marx strongly favored free trade as well as the development of capitalist relations throughout the world.

Were Marx alive today, I envision the following alignment: Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich and Karl Marx on one side of the NAFTA debate, with Lane Kirkland, Jesse Jackson, Ralph Nader, Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan on the other side.

There were many workers in Marx's day who opposed industrial development, seeking to defend their increasingly outdated craftsman way of life. These workers sought to destroy the new machines of the industrial era. Their ideological descendants today seek to resist the technological transformation of the smokestack manufacturing industries as well as the internationalization of the labor process. Their efforts will be as futile as those of the Silesian

weavers and the hand glass blowers of more than a century ago.

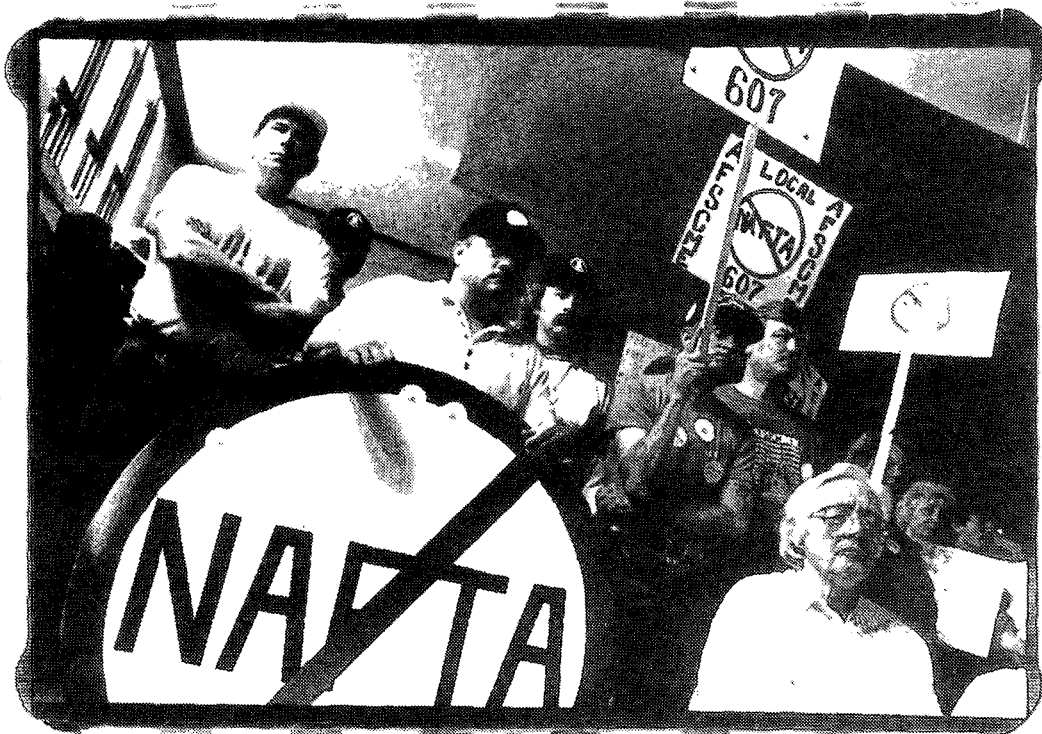
Free trade is progressive because it encourages industrial growth, innovation and productivity. It leads to greater economic integration of the world. This, in turn, sets the stage for political integration and could reduce the danger of world war. Of course, a more peaceful world will not come automatically. It will require the intervention of labor and the left to oppose nationalism and militarism.

Protectionism discourages innovation and productivity growth and slows worldwide trade. It leads to international conflict, raising the danger of war, while encouraging chauvinism among workers. Consider the current spate of Japan-bashing, crude comments about the Mexican people and anti-immigrant prejudices in the labor movement.

Popular opposition to NAFTA stems from the threat of losing jobs to Mexico, a process that would continue with or without NAFTA. With the shrinkage of jobs in many American industries, particularly union-represented low-skilled ones, this fear must be addressed. But job loss is the result of more than runaway shops. The productive process itself is being transformed. This is not a matter of "deindustrialization," as some claim, but of the development of new methods of production that require much less labor.

This means a net job loss *unless* there is a large expansion in the market for the end product. Since the economies of countries like Mexico are growing more rapidly than that of our own country, free trade with them should open more markets for our high-technology products. The tendency for lower-skilled labor-intensive tasks to shift to low-wage countries, both in Asia and Mexico, is irreversible under capitalism—short of adopting a policy of complete autarchy. So what can labor do to defend itself? It can adopt a different

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Oct. 18, 1993.) However, that was a defensive campaign. We need to go on the offensive to improve our educational system.

•**International solidarity:** The general trend within the world capitalist system is toward the equalization of wages. Right now American and European workers feel the pressure of low wages in developing countries upon their own jobs, working conditions and wages. However, the industrialization of developing countries in Latin America and the Pacific Rim creates the conditions for the upward movement of wages in those countries. A growth in industry will lead to a

strategy based upon a realistic acceptance of the changes taking place throughout the world. I would suggest the following:

•**Job retraining:** Some job dislocation due to free trade is inevitable, but government has a responsibility to train displaced workers and to find or create jobs for them. The companies that seek to move production abroad also have a responsibility, and should be required to pay for retraining and job-placement efforts. Job retraining should be required by law as well as enforced by union con-

tract. (See story on page 19.)

•**Education:** American workers need to be educated so that their skills are more marketable in the changing world economy. The trade unions need to place education reform at the top of their political agenda, rather than leaving the matter to the teacher unions. The recent successful campaign of the teacher unions against vouchers in California is a model for what can be accomplished. (See *In These Times*,

growth in the power of the labor movement and, through struggle, a rise in wages. We can expect major struggles in the near future in Mexico as its labor movement wrests itself free from government domination. American labor needs to support the labor movement in other countries, especially Mexico.

Tim Wohlforth is the author of *The Prophet's Children*, a memoir of life on the left published by Humanities Press.

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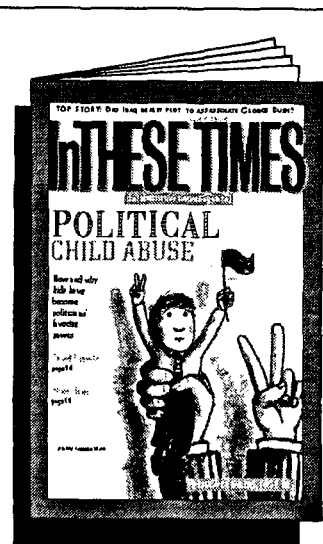
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# Give 'em health

By Vicente Navarro

**P**olls show that the majority of Americans resent the enormous privileges of the insurance companies and the other components of the medical-industrial complex, privileges obtained at an enormous cost to the U.S. population. These companies have been among the most profitable enterprises in the United States during the last two decades, at the same time that health care costs and the percentage of the population without coverage or with limited coverage have increased. Today, not surprisingly, the insurance salesman is the second most unpopular professional, after the used-car salesman. When Hillary Rodham Clinton says she is "tired of insurance companies running our health care system," most Americans would agree.

Yet the implementation of the Clinton "managed competition" proposal will put large insurance companies in command of the health care system.

The insurance companies operate in the health sector with one objective: to increase their profits. Making the insurance companies the managers of health care, as the Clinton proposal does, is to put the search for profits in command of the health care sector. In so doing, this proposal, along with those put forward by Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN), Sen. John Chafee (R-RI) and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX), will strengthen the profit-seeking behavior in the health sector, one of the major reasons for our present predicament of

high costs and limited coverage.

The profitability of the insurance industry is based not only on selecting and screening patients but on favoring those providers who consume the fewest resources, a strategy that frequently interferes with the quality of care. The current level of micro-management of the patient-provider relationship by the insurance companies in the United States is overwhelming—and unknown in any other developed country.

Contrary to general perception, it is not the physician but the insurance officer who finally decides on the course of the patient's treatment, and who has to approve any requests for tests, interventions and prescriptions above an arbitrary level. More than 50 percent of these requests are rejected.

In all of the current proposals—except the Wellstone-McDermott-Conyers bill—insurance-controlled plans will reduce services to optimize

*There is an urgent  
need to mobilize  
support for a  
single-payer system  
of health care.*

profits. And this is why managed competition is favored by large insurance companies. None other than Bill Link, vice president of Prudential Insurance, has indicated that "for Prudential, the best-case scenario for reform—preferable even to the status quo—would be enactment of a managed-competition proposal."

What we need is a single-payer system that, as in Canada, provides comprehensive and universal coverage without co-payments and deductibles, and also allows people to choose their providers. The accommodation of the Clinton proposal to the large insurance interests is vitiating Clinton's commitment to universal coverage and comprehensive benefits. The reduction in the choice of providers imposed by the large insurance-controlled plans; the multi-tier types of benefits whose distribution will depend on the ability to pay rather than on people's needs; the high deductibles, co-payments and fees: all are concessions made to large insurance companies and allied forces in the medical-industrial complex.

The single-payer proposal would eliminate these concessions. Clinton cannot pass his proposal without the support of single-payer advocates. To gain their support he has made some concessions, such as allowing states to choose a single-payer option. The insurance companies and the other components of the medical-industrial complex, however, are even more influential at the state level than at the federal level. Moreover, the pull by the U.S. Congress to move the Clinton proposal further to the right is powerful. There is an urgent need to mobilize support for the single-payer proposal, both to move the debate to the left and to expand and strengthen the single-payer elements in the legislation that Congress may finally approve. ◀

Vicente Navarro is a professor of health policy at Johns Hopkins University and the author of *Dangerous to Your Health: Capitalism in Health Care* (Monthly Review Press).

## DIALOGUE

# China's great leap downward

By Dave Lindorff

Jonathan Unger, in his article on China ("Taking the plunge," *In These Times*, Nov. 29, 1993), writes about a remarkable phenomenon taking place in the country—the forcing of all manner of public agencies and bureaus to become self-sufficient. It doesn't stop at schools and hospitals. The military itself is now the nation's biggest entrepreneur, running everything from hotels to toy factories as a way of paying its own bills.

I visited a post office in Jiangsu that had on its upper floor a fancy marble-floored dance hall, the proceeds of which are used to finance the postal operations. In Shanghai, I found that the public security bureau ran the city's hottest karaoke nightspot, which proved to be a bordello.

Some of these profit-making sidelines are harmless—and might even be a good idea, since they foster some much-needed independence from central authorities. But, for the most part, they are a disaster.

Fudan University, where I taught journalism for a year, was once one of China's top schools. Now students and faculty members alike tell me it has become a shadow of its former self. "There is no teaching going on here anymore," said one student. "It's just a bureaucracy and a bunch of people trying to make money."

In the arts, the situation is even worse. Students in the art and music academies, instead of experimenting and practicing, are now sent out by their schools to engage in money-making activities at the five-star hotels, painting and performing for tourist dollars that then go, not to them, but to the schools. The results are the most trite and low-brow "pop" forms of art—usually purely imitative of Western culture.

One can also imagine the potential for corruption when organizations like the army, the customs office, or the police are encouraged to engage in money-making enterprises.

Where I disagree with Unger is in his conclusion that there is little likelihood of change in China, and that the popular mood of the urban population is one of support for a strong central authority. Chinese political and economic analysts themselves are warning of major unrest as the "reform" program progresses in 1994 and 1995. The main reason they give is the increase in corruption and the dramatic widening of the gap between rich and poor. In the countryside, by the way, that unrest is already quite substantial, with even the government-run Chinese press reporting on riots, inter-town warfare and attacks on police stations by

angry peasants.

China's urban population, meanwhile, has the wealth of the new entrepreneurial elite and the corrupt party leadership thrust in its face daily, and it's hard to spend any time in any major city without hearing the anger and frustration that is welling up. Yet the major layoffs that must come when China follows through with plans to streamline and/or privatize the big state enterprises have barely begun. Already China has 100 million drifting unemployed workers and another 100 million underemployed peasants, none of whom is counted in the official unemployment rates. Soon to join them will be 500,000 decommissioned soldiers, a potentially explosive group.

Add to that mix the increasing power of the regions—a trend that, contrary to what Unger says, most people I've spoken with heartily support—and you have some powerful if unpredictable forces for change.

When (and there's no need to say "if" here) China's economy goes into a downturn, and all the new capitalist enterprises that have both sprung from and nurtured the current boom begin to lay off their workers and even go belly-up, there will be a revolutionary situation in China, for good or ill.

The only source of Beijing's legitimacy today is its success in promoting economic expansion. With all faith in Marxist and Maoist ideology long gone, China's leadership is well aware of the fragility of Communist rule. This is why Beijing is cracking down so hard on its dissident intellectuals and on those who would organize an independent labor movement.

America's business leaders are continuing to throw money into China's economy—and in the process propping up its current political structure—like there's no tomorrow. There will be a tomorrow, though, and it may be one that will make today's China investors wish they'd put their money in the bank. ◀

# I N P R I N T

## The arrogance of power

By James Weinstein

John F. Kennedy was assassinated 30 years ago, but speculation about his killer(s) still rages. On the left, conspiracy theories have become signs of radical legitimacy, while those who accept the lone assassin theory are summarily denounced as tools or dupes of the establishment. Oliver Stone's radical chic movie *JFK* alone suggested half a dozen theories. This debate can be intriguing. But while it generates a lot of heat, it sheds little light. Indeed, in some circles conspiracy theories serve no purpose other than to maintain left-wing bona fides when there seems to be nothing else to do.

Meanwhile, as a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll showed, most Americans think that Kennedy was our greatest president. Seen as a man who brought youth, hope and deep concern for his fellow Americans to the White House, Kennedy is revered as the last true liberal—a hero who fostered democracy at home and abroad. Even those who remember every detail of the assassination and the events surrounding it tend to fall victim to the Kennedy myth and to forget the reality of his administration.

This will be more difficult now that Richard Reeves has written his chronicle of the Kennedy days in the White House. Reeves illustrates why it is so much more important to understand who Kennedy was than to know who killed him.

Reeves' *President Kennedy* is not a history of the early '60s. Instead, he has simply traced "what [Kennedy] knew and when he knew it and what he actually did—sometimes day by day, sometimes hour by hour, sometimes minute by minute." His straightforward chronicle of Kennedy's two years and 10 months in the White House offers little in the way of interpretation or background. Drawing on informa-

tion taken from tape recordings, official documents, journals and notes made by the principals, and from interviews with survivors, Reeves paints a picture of an arrogant, ignorant, sometimes courageous man, concerned above all with his own political survival.

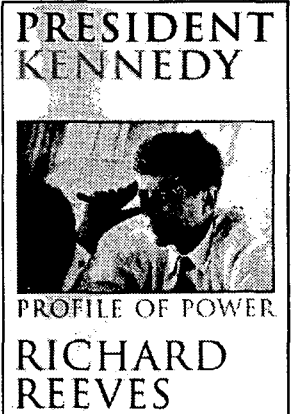
Kennedy, writes Reeves, "believed (and proved) that the only qualification for the most powerful job in the world was wanting it." And, as the material in the book makes clear, for JFK that might have been true—given that his father was one of the most politically connected Democrats in the country and had \$200 million to spend on his son's political career.

Kennedy's time in office was eventful. It included the flowering of the civil rights movement, the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis, the conflict that led to the Berlin Wall, the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the formation of the Alliance for Progress, and the creation of the Peace Corps. Reeves shows, perhaps unwittingly, that many of the most cherished beliefs held by Kennedy's fans (now and then) are simply mythological.

One of the most prevalent myths about the Kennedys is that they (especially JFK's brother Bobby) were champions of civil rights, and that Kennedy's presidency laid the basis for Johnson's strong civil rights record and the Great Society. During the 1960 campaign, JFK said that he would use "the full moral and political power of the presidency to obtain for all young Americans ... equal access to the voting booth, the schoolroom, to jobs, to housing and to public facilities." This campaign pledge encouraged some African-Americans, thinking they had a friend in the White House, to demand their rights. But once in office, JFK did everything he could to avoid showing any public support for the civil rights campaign. Kennedy was not hostile to the goals of the movement, but his fear of losing the South in 1964 carried more weight.

Then, too, Kennedy, as a child of privilege, didn't have a clue about how African-Americans, or indeed most ordinary Americans, lived. He had never worked or been in business himself. In 1962, at the age of 45, Reeves tells us, he was "still very much the rich boy who never paid his own bills. His father had set up an office in New York to handle such details and Kennedy rarely carried money in the pockets of his custom-made clothes." If he needed cash, he would just borrow it from whomever was around, and if the amount was worth the trouble, they could send a bill to New York.

Unlike Johnson, he had no



**President Kennedy:  
Profile of Power**  
By Richard Reeves  
Simon and Schuster  
798 pp., \$30



experience with African-Americans, except for casual acquaintance with some who moved in his upper-class social circles, and with his valet, George Thomas, whom Reeves tells us “had been a gift from [journalist] Arthur Krock, who repaid past debts to Joseph Kennedy by sending [Thomas] to take care of Joe’s son when he came to Washington in 1947 as a young bachelor used to being taken care of by servants.”

When, on Lincoln’s birthday in 1963, JFK was finally forced by the militant confrontations of the civil rights movement to meet with a group of 80 African-American leaders, he had them come to the back door of the White House “to keep them away from photographers in the public rooms.” In a background interview with black journalists just before that event, he told them that he saw “no serious divisions between white and Negro Americans.” But when he saw Sammy Davis Jr. at the gathering with Mai Britt, his white wife, JFK whispered to one aide after another to get them out of there before the official photograph was taken. Finally, he asked Jacqueline Kennedy to take Britt aside so that he could avoid the political disaster of having an interracial couple photographed in the White House. Jackie was outraged, and refused.

JFK complained constantly about the determination of the civil rights demonstrators and marchers. Through Bobby, he authorized J. Edgar Hoover to wiretap the phones of Martin Luther King and his close associates. And Kennedy dragged his feet as long as he could before events forced him to call on Congress to pass a civil rights bill. As Reeves lets us know, it was the civil rights movement, not Kennedy, that laid the basis for the progressive legislation of the mid-’60s.

If Kennedy was halfhearted about civil rights, he was passionate about Cuba and the need, as he saw it, to destroy Fidel Castro. Reeves treats Cuba as one of JFK’s Cold War problems, which it did become during his administration. But when JFK took office, Castro had not yet formed an alliance with the Soviets. In fact, the Cuban Communist party had opposed Castro until it became clear that he was about to win the revolution, and Castro had no use for the Communists or the Soviets until President Eisenhower imposed an oil embargo on Cuba just before he left office in January 1961.

The Bay of Pigs invasion was itself a legacy of the Eisenhower years, but it was only the first act in JFK’s pursuit of

Castro. Eisenhower had planned the Bay of Pigs invasion soon after Castro overthrew the dictator Fulgencio Batista. His Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson explained why to JFK: “Large amounts of U.S. capital now planned for investment in Latin America are waiting to see whether or not we can cope with the Cuban situation.”

In March 1960, Eisenhower had authorized the training by the CIA of more than a thousand Cuban exiles in Guatemala. The idea, Reeves writes, “was to duplicate the U.S. role in the overthrow of two leaders who might have been hostile to American interests, Premier Mohammed Mossadegh of Iran, in 1953, and President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman of Guatemala, in 1954.” And, as in those cases, Eisenhower had instructed: “Everyone must be prepared to swear that he has not heard of it.” The invasion itself never had a chance of success, since the CIA had mistakenly counted on a popular uprising in Cuba and on open American involvement, which Kennedy would not allow for political reasons.

Believing that “he had been set up for disaster by the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” the president was furious. But he was still determined to destroy the Castro regime. On June 13, 1961, Kennedy wrote that “there can be no long-term living with Castro as a neighbor.” In a conversation with the *New York Times* reporter Tad Szulc, JFK asked, “What would you think if I ordered Castro to be assassinated?” Szulc didn’t like the idea, and Kennedy said, “I agree with you completely.” He was just testing Szulc, he said, adding that it would be morally wrong. Then he issued an order to carry forward plans for Castro’s assassination.

These plans and activities had started during Eisenhower’s second term. Reeves tells us that the plots against Castro had been going on before it was “clear whether he was a Communist or not, but [when it] was clear that he was expropriating Cuban properties of U.S. corporations.” And the plots continued even after the Cuban missile crisis ended, in 1963, with an agreement that Khrushchev would remove his missiles and that JFK would not invade Cuba, or allow any other Western Hemisphere nation to do so.

Nor was Castro the only target of U.S. assassination attempts. When Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo “reacted to cuts in U.S. aid by opening conversations with Castro,” Eisenhower initiated efforts to dispose of him. These plans were continued and successfully carried out six months after



JFK took office.

Then, too, there was Vietnam. After Vietnam was “temporarily” divided between North and South at the Paris peace negotiations in 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem, a Catholic who had lived in the United States from 1950 on, was chosen as premier of South Vietnam. At first, Diem was the darling of the United States. But, as Reeves tells us, he was an ineffective leader and a nationalist. Kennedy feared that he would make a deal with the Communists and expel the Americans. His assassination took place with JFK’s approval only weeks before Kennedy was shot in Dallas.

In fact, though Reeves doesn’t mention it, Kennedy’s Vietnam obsession went back many years. As a senator in 1954, Kennedy had argued that the United States should make “some commitment of our manpower” whenever “necessary” to stop the Communists from governing Vietnam. When he became president six years later, a small number of military advisers were already on the ground.

After Kennedy’s disastrous meeting with Khrushchev in June 1961 (“Worst thing in my life. He savaged me,” Kennedy told James Reston of the *New York Times*), he decided that “we have to confront them,” and that “the only place we can do that is Vietnam.” So by the end of his first year in office, Kennedy had begun to send more troops. And he had secretly approved the use of napalm against civilian populations, as well as of defoliants designed to clear jungle areas and to destroy crops that supported local guerrillas.

The myth goes that Kennedy wanted to end this operation and that he was planning to withdraw a thousand troops when he was killed. But Reeves demonstrates convincingly that this was only a projected campaign ploy. The 1954 Geneva accords informally bound the United States to a limit of 685 troops in Vietnam. But by 1963, Kennedy had 17,000 troops fighting the war on the ground and in the air in Vietnam. And, far from planning to withdraw, in June 1963 he approved plans for escalation, the third phase of which was “to constitute the initiation of military action against North Vietnam.”

Throughout this process, Kennedy publicly denied that Americans were fighting in Vietnam. While every member of the National Security Council, including Kennedy, knew that there was no light at the end of the tunnel, Kennedy told various members of the press that he was planning to withdraw some troops and that American involvement on the ground would end by 1965. In fact, he had no such intentions.

The Alliance for Progress, like Vietnam, was part of Kennedy’s program of low-intensity warfare, though it was presented by Kennedy and the media, then and ever since, as a move to bolster democracy in the region. Reeves barely touches on the subject, but he tells us that Kennedy ordered the creation of “police academies” with American officers and FBI agents as instructors on fighting subversion. “Teach them how to control mobs and fight guerrillas,” Kennedy said. “Increase the intimacy between our armed forces and the military in Latin America.” The first of these secret

police academies—now known as the School of the Americas (SOA) and located at Fort Benning, Ga.—was established on U.S. property in the Panama Canal Zone in 1962. Its mission was to train South American and Central American police forces in riot control and intelligence and interrogation techniques.

These schools, along with the Alliance-for-Progress-inspired arms sales to Latin American armies, were, Reeves tells us, “obviously tempting generals to dispose of elected leaders, confident that their new friends in North America might look the other way as long as the coups were presented as anti-communist.”

The academies, and their successor, the School of the Americas, served primarily as training grounds for death-squad leaders and assassins. Those trained at the SOA have been largely responsible for the slaughter of some 30,000 Mayan Indians in Guatemala, thousands of peasants, Jesuit priests and even the archbishop in El Salvador, for the recent coup in Haiti—and much more. And, of course, they have served well to protect U.S. corporate interests against the threat of real democracy in the region.

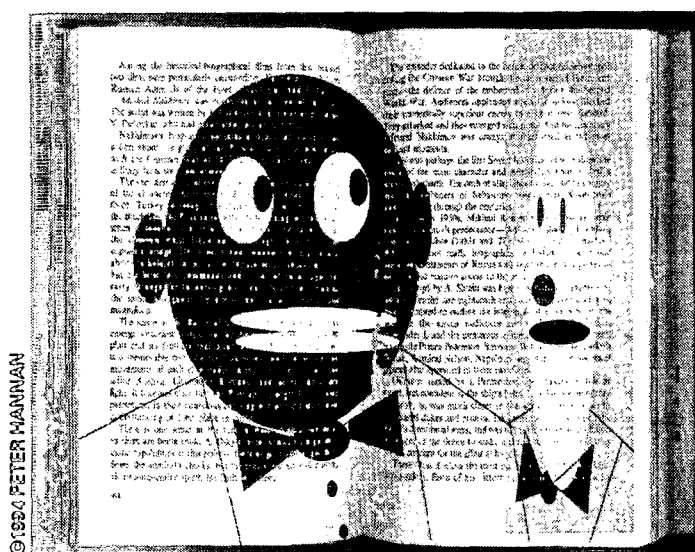
The SOA also became one of the CIA’s major recruiting grounds. Signed up when they were young officers at the SOA, the “students” became lifetime “assets,” and the source of much of the misinformation received and believed by U.S. policy-makers.

Reeves does not dwell on the Kennedys’ personal lives. He only rarely mentions Jackie, and, to his credit, Reeves avoids the temptation to explore fully JFK’s sexual escapades while in office. But he does make it clear that Kennedy, who used women the way he used kleenex, makes Bill Clinton look like a choirboy. And he paints a picture of an upper-class-boys-club atmosphere in which the president used many of his top aides as procurers in an all-male administration of a sort no longer possible.

Reeves’ discussion of the Cold War confrontations between Kennedy and Khrushchev are impressively candid and free of the usual one-sidedness that has been typical of Camelot memoirists. All in all, this is a courageous presentation of the facts. It would be stronger with a bit more historical context for the benefit of readers not already familiar with many of the issues he discusses. But if you want to know what Kennedy did or thought, there’s no better source than this.

As a historical icon, JFK was rescued by his assassination. His accomplishments were few, his principles weak, his ambition overweening. But he was young and glamorous, and his wife brought culture and art to the White House. The less the American people know about his activities in office, the easier it is to maintain the image of a compassionate leader dedicated to democracy at home and abroad. It is an image made so attractive by media promotion that Bill Clinton strives to present himself as a second incarnation of JFK. Unfortunately, it appears that Clinton has more in common with the real Kennedy than with the myth. ◀

## SPEED READING



**Love and Theft:**  
**Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class**  
 By Eric Lott  
 Oxford University Press  
 314 pp., \$24.95

Blackface minstrelsy—with its burnt-cork makeup and its exaggerated racist buffoonery—seems such a grotesque example of cultural violence that it is tempting to dismiss the subject as simply beneath contempt. But we can't: the essential impulse behind the racial masquerade of blackface, what historian Eric Lott, in *Love and Theft*, calls the “dialectical flickering of racial insult and racial envy,” is still prevalent, even pervasive, in our popular culture.

With the notable exception of Ted Danson, our blackface performers—from Elvis Presley to Vanilla Ice—have not literally put on the cork; but they have appropriated the styles, the moves, the attitudes of their black role models as their own. And in recent years, countless numbers of white teenagers have attempted similar transformations themselves, adopting with enthusiasm, and a surprising degree of sincerity, the language, the music, the rituals of their black peers: rap sells better in the 'burbs than it does in the 'hood. This appropriation is meant as a compliment, a sign of admiration. But, as Lott argues, even the crudest cultural appropriations, the “symbolic crossings of racial boundaries—through dialect, gesture, and so on—paradoxically engage and absorb the culture being mocked or mimicked.”

19th-century minstrelsy—like the current white appropriation of rap—grew not from simple racism but from complex and conflicting feelings among whites toward blacks—a mixture, as Lott argues, of fear and envy, hatred and desire, “ridicule and wonder.” Lott probes the depths of this ambivalence, and spells out in some detail the multiple

meanings of this strange ritual, at once radical and reactionary.

Blackface minstrelsy was born in the 1830s in the industrial North, embroiled from the beginning in the country's complex dramas of class and racial antagonism—reflecting, and in some ways quite literally embodying, the central dilemmas of its time and place. “Born of social conflict, blackface sometimes usefully intensified it,” Lott writes, “based on the social violence of cultural caricature, it paradoxically resulted in the blackening of America.” The minstrel show was first and foremost a working-class institution, and its contradictions reflected the contradictions of working-class life and ideology. By the 1840s, though, much of the anger of America's working class was sublimated into evangelical crusades and ethnic nationalism. Workers turned less on their bosses and more on upper-class abolitionists, and, in the broadest terms, racism prevailed over class struggle.

Despite Lott's obvious erudition—or perhaps because of it—*Love and Theft* can be difficult going. Lott can write, when he wishes, with elegance and bite. But the book is obviously a product of the academy (Lott teaches at the University of Virginia), combining the discursive indeterminacy of post-poststructuralist cultural analysis with an earnest academic Marxism. Lott doesn't approach his subjects head on; instead, he circles around them, poking at them from various angles, scattering small fragments of insight for his readers to gather up. Lott makes his readers work. But in many ways his method complements well the essential ambiguity of his subject. This kind of subtlety, unfortunately, is too often lacking in our contemporary racial discourse.

—David Futrelle

**Against All Odds:**  
**A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution**  
 By Dan Connell  
 Red Sea Press  
 309 pp., \$24.95

Those of us who write about the Third World regard Dan Connell as a legendary figure. In 1976, he started reporting on the struggle of the 3.5 million people in Eritrea, the mountainous region in the Horn of Africa bordering the Red Sea, to free their country from Ethiopia, which had annexed the region in the '50s. Ethiopia first used some of the nearly \$300 million in American military aid to try to put down the uprising, and then, after a cynical superpower switch in the late '70s, an estimated \$11 billion from the Soviets, Cubans and their allies.

Over the years, Connell returned to the rugged Eritrean countryside more than 15 times, dodging strafing runs by Soviet-made warplanes, filing stories to many newspapers and magazines under a variety of pseudonyms, even risking a death threat. He helped form a group called Grassroots International, based in Somerville, Mass., to channel aid and



later famine relief to the Eritrean cause. He was in Eritrea in 1991 when the liberation movement made the final big push that helped topple the criminal, pseudo-leftist Mengistu regime in Ethiopia itself, and he was back again last year when the territory voted overwhelmingly for independence. (See *In These Times*, June 28, 1993.)

Eritrea matters not only because the right people, after 30 years and hundreds of thousands of deaths, finally won. It matters because the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) seems genuinely committed to the kind of pluralist, non-ethnic democracy that should, if successful, serve as an impressive example to the rest of the Third World, much of which is still sinking under one-party authoritarianism or splitting apart in tribal fighting. As proof of its sincerity, the EPLF is actually going to dissolve itself to clear the way for a multi-party system, a commendable step that would have prevented other genuine liberation movements—Algeria, Cuba and Vietnam come immediately to mind—from hardening into repressive, out-of-touch bureaucracies.

Few Western journalists have been involved in Third World history as long or as deeply as Connell. Over 16 years, he trekked great distances and stayed in remote villages for months on end; his narrative is at times an exciting story of adventure, a modern memoir of exploration written by a modest democratic socialist instead of a 19th-century great white hunter.

—James North

Those wondering why an administration that came to office promising change has instead delivered more of the same will find suggestive answers in *State of the Union: The Clinton Administration and the Nation in Profile* (Westview Press), edited by Richard Kaplan and John Feffer. The volume, the first in a projected annual series published under the auspices of the Institute for Policy Studies, includes essays by Barbara Ehrenreich, Paul Wellstone, Ralph Nader, Roger Wilkins and many others, covering topics ranging from health care and poverty to democratic reform. Short on rhetoric and long on details, and properly distrustful of Democratic promises, the book is a useful guide for anyone attempting to visualize a way past the current bipartisan malaise. The essays are more sobering than inspirational, but these aren't exactly inspirational times.

And, for your alternative to the alternative, take a look at the new issue of *The Baffler*, a Chicago-based journal with a delightfully acerbic hostility to consumerist hip, combining some of the literate snottiness of H.L. Mencken with the anarchic politics of punk. Aiming to "blunt the cutting edge," *The Baffler* #5 offers a series of essays, manifestos and other writings on the corporate (and academic) appropriation of "alternative" culture. Published irregularly by a group of University of Chicago students, *The Baffler* can be a bit sophomoric at times—but that's part of its appeal. (For a copy, send \$5 to *The Baffler*, P.O. Box 378293, Chicago IL, 60637.)

—D.F.

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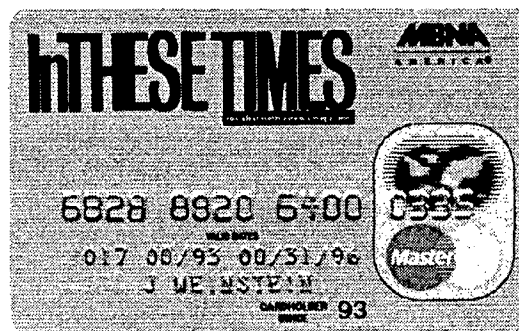
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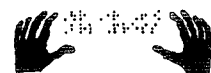
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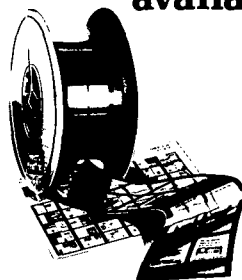
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Continued from page 40

merchants to sell them below cost. They never caught on. To save face, the Agency shipped the unsold dolls to Guatemala, where security forces purchased them for use in electrode-placement training.

**"The Ché, please" (1964-67):** Stung by the abysmal failure of the Bay of Pigs, the CIA began a wide range of covert operations against Cuba during the mid-'60s. The campaign included an operation that sought a "semantic embargo" against the island nation. The plan was to somehow eradicate the word "Cuba" from English usage, and the first target was the increasingly popular "Cuban Sandwich." A team of CIA chefs, charged with creating an acceptable alternative to the name, came up with "Flat-wich," "The Porker" and "Cha-Cha Burger."

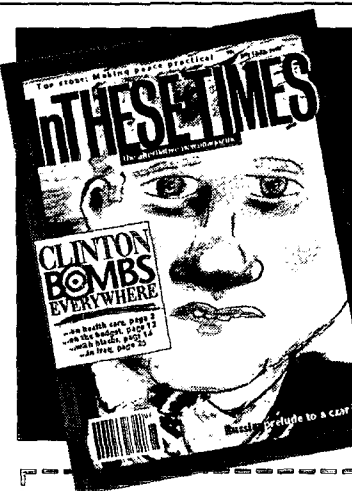
Wholesalers, restaurateurs and food industry executives were given "research fund" kickbacks to convince them to use the new name. Desi Arnaz was approached as a possible spokesman for the plan. He refused and was immediately placed under surveillance. Promotional ads were shot featuring singer/dancer Charo, but mercifully were shelved when the funding for the project was pulled in late 1967.

**"Code Name: Sugar Daddy" (1987):** In early 1987, long-time U.S.-taxpayer-fattened Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko experienced destabilizing domestic problems. Specifically, his 123 mistresses were in revolt—demanding resumption of regular Paris shopping junkets, which had been curtailed by Mobutu to help appease World Bank officials. The obscenely extravagant junkets, financed largely with U.S. foreign aid, had also gotten the attention of certain American senators.

To "ease" Mobutu's dilemma, the CIA set up a unique and expensive home shopping channel system for Mobutu's harem. A cooperative U.S. shopping channel (unnamed) set up a secret studio hawking French wares from champagne to *couture*. The show was transmitted to a satellite dish in Kinshasa via a CIA satellite download. The operation was shut down after an irate Nancy Reagan (tipped off by designer friend Karl Lagerfeld) complained to her husband about an "unfair fashion advantage" somewhere in Africa.

**"Zombies for Aristide" (ongoing):** Convinced by Haitian military personnel on the CIA payroll that the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was an unstable, power-hungry tyrant in waiting, the Agency set up this operation in early 1992. Agents disguised as voodoo priests began to spin terrifying tales of how Aristide had promised U.S. sugar interests free zombie labor in exchange for election financing. In addition, "proof" was offered that many of his votes came from dead citizens. Utilizing oxygen-recycling devices secreted in special coffins, agents staged several "resurrections," whereby zombies emerged from their lightly buried coffins wearing "I ♥ Aristide" T-shirts. Gruesomely made up, they were paid to parade about, mumbling that Aristide had become a loa, or voodoo deity. The CIA has recently hired Ed Rollins as a special consultant on the project.

Woody Igou writes regularly for *In These Times*.



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By Woody Igou

I got the call just past midnight. It was a high-ranking CIA covert-operations officer whom I had befriended years ago. He sounded sad and distant, as if someone had jabbed him in the buttocks with an umbrella point dipped in cobra-venom extract. He exhaled gravely.

"People are getting a warped impression of the Agency because of this Venezuela cocaine import fiasco," he said. "They need to know that not all of our covert-operation failures involve endangering the lives of innocent American taxpayers."

He then outlined for me a number of "happier, less morally bankrupt fiascos" that he felt would show the CIA in a more "balanced light." I agreed to pass on this refreshing information.

"Operation Guys 'n' Dolls" (1982-84): In the early '80s, CIA sociologists grew frustrated with the continued peaceful path of Costa Rica in the midst of otherwise warlike Central America. Acting on a secret study entitled "Passivity in the Pre-Adolescent Costa Rican Male," the Agency targeted the Costa Rican male doll market for manipulation.

The plan entailed the importation into Costa Rica of GI Joe dolls to supplant the best-selling male Costa Rican dolls of that time—"My Buddy Dag" (based upon former U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld) and "Little Gandhi." The Agency purchased 1 million GI Joe dolls, imported them and paid local

*Continued on page 39*